POSTHUMOUS WORKS

OF

FREDERIC II.

KING OF PRUSSIA.

VOL. VIII.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

THOMAS HOLCROFT.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.



CORRESPONDENCE

LETTERS

BETWEEN

FREDERIC II.

AND

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

LETTER CCXCI.

From the King.

Radeberg, June 21, 1760.

I HAVE received two of your letters at once; one dated the 30th of May, and another the 3d of June. You thank me for having restored a part of your youth: I find I have actually been in an error, Your Oedipus appeared in the year 1718; you were then nineteen years of age*; hence——

We were yesterday about to give battle; but the enemy, who was here, retreated for Radeberg, and I missed my aim. This intelligence

* M. de Voltaire was born November 20, 1694.

you may publiſh over all Swiſſerland, if you think proper.

You talk to me continually of peace; and I have done every thing in my power to effect it, between France and England, myſelf included. The French wiſhed to play me a trick, and I ſtopped proceedings: this was but natural. I ſhall make no peace without the Engliſh, nor will the Engliſh make peace without me. I will ſooner have myſelf * * *. than pronounce the word peace to the French.

What is the meaning of the pacific air which your duke affects, relative to me? You add that he cannot act according to his own manner of thinking. But of what importance is his manner of thinking to me, if he be not maſter of his own actions? I give up the cabal of Verſailles to the pettyfogging of thoſe who amuſe themſelves with intrigues. I have no time to loſe in purſuits ſo futile; and, were I to periſh, I would ſooner addreſs myſelf to the great Mogul, than to Louis the well-beloved, to guide me out of the preſent labyrinth.

I have ſaid nothing againſt him, but I bitterly repent having written more good of him, in verſe, than he deſerves; and if, during the preſent war, of which I regard him as the promoter, I have not ſpared him, in ſome pieces, it was becauſe

becauſe he had treated me outrageouſly; and I defend myſelf with every weapon I poſſeſs, however dull they may be. Neither is this ſpoiled paper known to any perſon. I therefore do not underſtand any thing of theſe perſonalities; unleſs by the phraſe you mean La Pompadour.

I do not, however, think that a king of Pruſſia is obliged to pay any of the duties of decorum to a Miſs Poiſſon; eſpecially if ſhe be arrogant, and fail in the reſpect ſhe owes to crowned heads.

This is my confeſſion; this is all I could ſay to Minos, or Rhadamanthus, were I obliged to appear at their tribunal. But I have often been made to ſpeak, when I have not opened my lips; things may have been attributed to me, which I never ſo much as thought. Theſe are tricks which have frequently been employed by the court of Vienna, and which have been ſucceſsful in more than one inſtance.

Such treachery, in reality, is not worth my further mention. Do you want a few ſugar plums? You ſhall have them, and they ſhall poſſeſs the ſweet flavour of truth. In you I eſteem the fineſt genius the world has ever produced. I admire your verſe, and I love your proſe; eſpecially thoſe ſhort detached pieces that are to be found among your miſcellanies.

Never had author before you a touch, a ſenſe of feeling ſo exquiſite, or a taſte ſo certain and ſo delicate, as you poſſeſs. In converſation you are captivating; you have the art at once both to inſtruct and to amuſe; you are the moſt ſeducing creature I know; and are capable of making yourſelf univerſally beloved, whenever you pleaſe. You have ſo many of the gifts of fancy, that you can offend, and at the ſame inſtant merit the indulgence of thoſe who know you. In fine, you would be perfect, but that you are a man.

Be ſatisfied with this brief panegyric; you ſhall have no more praiſe from me to-day. I have orders to give, places to reconnoitre, diſpoſitions to make, and diſpatches to dictate.

I recommend ſir count *de Tourney* to the protection of his guardian angel, of the moſt holy and immaculate Virgin, and to the young chevalier of the ——. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S. For your amuſement, perhaps, I add a ſhort morſel to my letter, as our good D'Argens ſays. I wrote this ſcrap for a Swiſs, who had ſerved during a year in my artillery. The honeſt Swiſs, in his garriſon at Breda, having captivated the affections of a handſome Dutch girl,

ſeveral

ſeveral times demanded my permiſſion to marry her, when peace ſhould be concluded. At length I granted it; but the beauteous damſel died of love, unwilling to wait ſo long; and maſter Cupid took flight, with an arrow's ſpeed. *O tempus! O mores!* You ſee I do not forget my Latin *. *Vale.*

LETTER CCXCII.

From the King.

October 31, 1760.

I AM obliged to you for the part you take in the few accidental ſtrokes of good fortune which I have wreſted from chance. The Ruſſians have ſince acted moſt furiouſly in Brandenburg. I haſtened thither, they immediately fled; and I have now turned toward Saxony, where affairs demand my preſence. We have ſtill two long months to keep the field, and this has been the moſt fatiguing and the ſevereſt of campaigns: my conſtitution is ſenſible of it; my health is enfeebled; and my mind is on the decline, in proportion as its caſe is threatened with ruin.

* The king certainly muſt be joking, when he ſaid this. T.

I know not what letter has been intercepted, which I may have written to the marquis d'Argens: it may have been written by me, or it may have been fabricated at Vienna.

I am neither acquainted with the duke de Choiſeul nor any one of his progenitors, from Adam to this hour. Whether he entertain pacific or warlike ſentiments is to me of little importance. If he love peace, why does he not make peace? I am ſo buſied, by my own affairs, that I have not time to think of thoſe of others. But let us not trouble ourſelves with any of theſe illuſtrious raſcals, the ſcourges of earth and man.

Pray inform me why you think proper to write the hiſtory of the wolves and bears of Siberia. What have you to ſay of the Czar, which is not inſerted in the Life of Charles XII.? I will not read the hiſtory of ſuch barbarians! I ſhould be much better pleaſed, were it poſſible I could be ignorant that they are inhabitants of our hemiſphere.

Your zeal flames forth againſt the Jeſuits, and ſuperſtition. You do well to combat error; but do you imagine the world will reform? The human mind is weak; more than three fourths of mankind are formed to be the ſlaves of fanaticiſm; the moſt abſurd fears of the devil,

and

and of hell, faſcinate their eyes, and they deteſt the ſage who wiſhes to ſhew them truth. The majority of our ſpecies conſiſts of fools and knaves. In vain do I ſeek for that pretended image of God, of whom divines aſſure us man bears the impreſſion. Each man contains a wild beaſt within himſelf; few have the ſtrength to lead him in chains, and moſt turn him looſe, when not reſtrained by the terrors of the law.

Perhaps you will think me too much of a miſanthrope. I am ill, in pain, and am contending with a demi-dozen of he-knaves and ſhe-knaves, who would unhorſe Socrates, or Antoninus himſelf. You do well to follow the advice of Candide, and to be ſatisfied with cultivating your garden. All men are not permitted to act thus: the ox muſt be yoked to the plough, the nightingale muſt ſing, the dolphin ſwim, and I make war.

The longer I follow this trade, the more am I perſuaded of the potent interference of fortune; but I do not think I ſhall long continue the profeſſion. My health viſibly declines, and it is very probable I ſhall ſoon go to converſe with Virgil on the Henriade; and deſcend into that country where our vexations, our pleaſures, our hopes, and our fears follow us not; where your fine genius and that of a chimney-

ſweeper are of equal worth; and where, in ſhort, we ſhall again be reduced to our original inſignificance.

Perhaps you may ſoon amuſe yourſelf in writing my epitaph. You will ſay I loved good, and that I wrote bad poetry; that I was not ſtupid enough not to admire your talents; that —that is, you will render an account of me ſimilar to the image which Babouc preſents of Paris to the genius Ithuriel.

Conſidering my ſituation, I here ſend you a very long letter. I find it to be a little too gloomy, but it ſhall depart ſuch as it is; it ſhall not now be ſtopped on its road, but e'en let it remain in that profound oblivion to which I ſentence it.

Adieu. Live happy, and pronounce a ſhort *benedicite* in favour of thoſe poor philoſophers who are in purgatory.

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCXCIII.

From the King.

Strehlen, November, 1761.

WILL not the hermit of the *Délices* * laugh at me, and at all the parcels I ſend? Here comes another poem, which I have written for Catt; but not in the ſtyle of my elegies, which you have had the kindneſs to receive with careſſes. The good fellow, finding me continually in company with the Stoics, ſome days ſince remarked that theſe fine gentlemen afford no aid in misfortune; that Greſſet, the Lutrin of Boileau, Chaulieu, and your works, were better adapted to my gloomy ſituation; and that theſe talkative philoſophers were unneceſſary, eſpecially when a man poſſeſſed in himſelf that ſtrength of mind which they neither do nor can beſtow.

I made my humble remonſtrances; he would not give ground; and, ſome days after our learned converſation, I diſpatched this Epiſtle to him. As it was neceſſary I ſhould take ſatisfaction

* *Délices.* Delights, an epithet given by Voltaire to his reſidence in Switzerland. He uſed to date his letters *au Délices.* T.

for

for the injury he had done my Stoics, I joked with him concerning ſome fine ladies who had been deſperately in love with his perſon.

Poets indulge in exaggeration without ſcruple; I therefore have painted him flying from conqueſt to conqueſt, which, in reality, is not a part of his character, nor the temper of his mind.

Will you not tell me, my dear hermit, that I am an old lunatic, thus to employ myſelf with things ſo frivolous, circumſtanced as I at preſent am? But thus do I lull my pains and cares to reſt. I gain a few moments pleaſure; and theſe moments over, which fly, alas! with ſpeed inconceivable, the tormenting fiend again recovers all his rights.

I am preparing to depart for Breſlau, there to make arrangements for the heroic butcheries of the coming year. Pray for a Don Quixote who is eternally obliged to be tilting, and for whom there are no hopes of repoſe, while perſecuted by his enraged enemies.

To the author of Alzira, and Merope, I wiſh that tranquillity, of which, by my unlucky ſtar, I am deprived. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCXCIV.

From the King.

Berlin, January 1, 1765.

I HAVE ſuppoſed you were ſo occupied in cruſhing the *infamous* —— * that I could not preſume you thought on any other ſubject. The blows you have already dealt would long ſince have ſlain the hydra, did it not as inceſſantly revive, and riſe out of that ſuperſtition which is ſpread over the face of the whole globe. For my own part, long ſince undeceived concerning the quackeries by which men are impoſed upon, I rank the theologian, the aſtrologer, the alchymiſt, and the phyſician in the ſame claſs.

I have infirmities and diſeaſes, and I cure myſelf by regimen and patience. It is the will of nature that our ſpecies ſhould pay, at death, a tribute of two and a half per cent †.

* *L'inf*——. This is all which is written of the *phraſe*, which in the ſucceeding letters is frequently repeated. The *word* may be *infernal*; or it may, and indeed appears to be, *infamous*; it may be various other words. The meaning or ſpirit of the *phraſe* the reader will gueſs, without difficulty. T.

† *Que notre eſpèce payât, à la mort, un tribut de deux et demi pour cent.*

This

This is an immutable law, which the faculty would in vain oppoſe; and, though I have a very high opinion of the abilities of the ſieur Tronchin, he ſtill cannot but allow there are few ſpecific remedies; and that, ſay what we will, mountains of herbs and minerals can neither re-forge nor refit the worn wheels that are half deſtroyed by time.

The moſt able phyſicians doſe the patient to pacify his imagination, but cure him by regimen; and, as I do not find that elixirs and potions can afford me the leaſt relief, when I feel myſelf ill, I ſubject myſelf to a ſevere regimen; in which practice I have hitherto been ſucceſsful.

You may, therefore, conſole Europe, on the important loſs which ſhe imagined ſhe ſhould have ſuffered, in my particular perſon; a loſs which I ſuppoſe to be of ſmall conſequence; for, though I have neither a ſtrong nor a confirmed ſtate of health, ſtill I live: though I am not of opinion that our exiſtence is worth the trouble of prolonging, even were the thing poſſible.

I am, however, much obliged to you for the intereſt you take in my health, and for the kind things you ſay to me. I regret that your age ſhould afford juſt cauſe of apprehenſion,

that, with you, the world will ſee the laſt of that nurſery of great men, men remarkable for their genius, by whom the age of Louis XIV. was ſignalized.

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCXCV.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, October 24, 1765.

THOUGH I want the art to reſtore you to youth, I never want the wiſh to ſee you long continue to live the ornament and the preceptor of our age. What would become of the belles-lettres, were they to loſe you? You have no ſucceſſor; live, therefore, as long as you poſſibly can.

I ſee you have the eſtabliſhment of the little colony, of which you have ſpoken to me, at heart *. I find a difficulty in anſwering you, on ſeveral articles. That houſe at Mailan,

* A colony of French philoſophers, who were to have ſettled at Cleves; and who might there freely have publiſhed truth, without fear of miniſters, prieſts, or parliaments.

which

which you mention, near Cleves, has been ruined by the French; and, as well as I can recollect, has been beſtowed on ſome perſon, who has undertaken to rebuild it, for his own uſe. The farms which I poſſeſs, in that country, are let on leaſe; nor can I enter into a contract with any other farmer till the term of ſuch leaſes ſhall be expired.

This need not prevent the ſettlement of your colony; and, in my opinion, the moſt ſimple means would be for theſe people to ſend ſome perſon to Cleves, there to examine what might ſuit them beſt, and in what it will be in my power to favour them. This would be the ſhorteſt method; and would abridge all the miſunderſtandings to which diſtance, and ignorance of local ſituation, might give place.

I congratulate you on your good opinion of mankind. For my part, being by the duties of my ſtation neceſſarily well acquainted with this ſpecies of unfeathered bipeds, I predict that neither you, nor all the philoſophers on earth, will correct the human race of that ſuperſtition to which it clings. Nature has mingled this ingredient in the compoſition of man; it is fear; it is feebleneſs; it is credulity; it is premature deciſion; which, by a general propenſity, lead men to the belief of the marvellous.

There

There are few philoſophic minds of ſufficient ſtrength to ſuffer the deſtruction of thoſe errors, which have taken deep root from the prejudices of education. This is the reaſon that you ſee men of ſenſe undeceived reſpecting popular errors, and rejecting abſurdities, during health; but, at the approach of death, they become ſuperſtitious through fear, and die capuchins. In ſome, you find their mode of thinking depends on their good or ill digeſtion.

It is not ſufficient, in my opinion, to undeceive mankind; they muſt be inſpired with fortitude; or the feelings and the fears of death will triumph over the moſt methodical and efficacious arguments.

You think, becauſe the Quakers and Socinians have rendered ſimplicity a part of religion, by ſimplifying ſtill more, a new creed on this plan might be propagated. I recur to what I have already ſaid: I am almoſt convinced that, ſhould the flock become conſiderable, in a very ſhort time ſome new ſuperſtition would ariſe; unleſs, at leaſt, it were compoſed of none but ſouls exempt from fear and weakneſs; and with ſuch it is not eaſy to meet.

I think however that the voice of reaſon, by exclaiming againſt fanaticiſm, may render the

future generation more tolerant than the preſent; and this would be conſiderable gain.

To you mankind will be indebted, for having corrected them of the moſt cruel, the moſt barbarous phrenzy by which they ever were poſſeſſed, and the conſequences of which are horrible.

Fanaticiſm, and the rage of ambition, have ruined the flouriſhing provinces of my country. If you wiſh to be informed of the amount of the devaſtations that have been committed, know that, in the whole, I have rebuilt eight thouſand houſes in Sileſia, and ſix thouſand five hundred in Pomerania and the New March; which, according to Newton and d'Alembert, will amount to fourteen thouſand five hundred. Moſt of them had been burnt down by the Ruſſians. We have not made war in a mode ſo abominable; nor have we deſtroyed more than ſome houſes in towns which we have beſieged, the number of which certainly is not near one thouſand. We have not been led aſtray by bad example; and, in this reſpect, my conſcience is free from reproach.

At preſent, every thing being tranquil and recovered, philoſophers above all men ſhall find an aſylum in every part of my kingdom; much more ſo ſhall the enemy of Baal, or of that religion

ligion which, in the country where you live *, is called the *whore of Babylon*.

I recommend you to the holy keeping of Epicurus, Ariſtippus, Locke, Gaſſendi, Bayle, and all thoſe minds that had ſhaken off their prejudices, and whoſe immortal genius has rendered them ſtationary cherubim, in the grand arch of truth.

FREDERIC.

If you will but ſend us ſome of the books you mention, you will give pleaſure to thoſe who hope in him who is to deliver his people from the yoke of impoſtors.

LETTER CCXCVI.

From the King.

Berlin, January 8, 1766.

A MORE pleaſant old man than yourſelf is not to be found. All the gaiety, all the amenity of your youth you ſtill poſſeſs. Your letter on miracles made me die with laughter. Little did I expect to find myſelf there, and was ſurpriſed to ſee myſelf ſtationed between Auſtri-

* That is, by the people of Geneva, the Calviniſts. T.

ans and hogs. Your mind is youthful ſtill, and while it ſhall thus remain there is nothing to fear for the body. The abundance of that liquid which circulates through the nerves, and animates the brain, proves that you ſtill poſſeſs the ſources of life.

Had you ſaid to me, ten years ago, what you have ſaid at the cloſe of your letter, you would ſtill have been here.

Talents alone diſtinguiſh great men from the vulgar. We may prevent ourſelves from committing enormous crimes, but we cannot correct a temperament which is productive of certain effects.

Though the moſt fertile land, at the ſame time that it brings forth wheat, likewiſe brings forth tares, the *infamous* —— is productive of none but poiſonous herbs. To you is reſerved the feat of vanquiſhing it, with your Herculean club, and by the ridicule with which you aſſault it, which is of much more deſtructive force than argument. Few men have learnt the art of reaſoning, but all ſhrink from ridicule.

Certain it is that, in every country, all who are called *the better ſort of people* begin to think. In ſuperſtitious Bohemia, and in Auſtria, though the ancient ſeats of bigotry, men of ſenſe begin to open their eyes. The ſame worſhip is not

now paid, as formerly was, to the images of ſaints.

Whatever obſtructions the court may invent, in order to prevent the admiſſion of philoſophic books, truth ſtill vanquiſhes all theſe acts of ſeverity. Though her progreſs be not rapid, it is ſtill a great point gained to ſee a certain part of the world rending the bandage of ſuperſtition.

In our proteſtant countries, we travel faſter; and perhaps not more than a century is requiſite to entirely extinguiſh thoſe animoſities which have originated in parties *ſub utrâque*, and in the Sorbonne. Of all the vaſt domains of fanaticiſm, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Bavaria, are the chief countries in which ſtupid ignorance, and numbneſs of underſtanding, ſtill ſupport ſuperſtition.

With reſpect to your men of Geneva, ſince you have been among them, they are not only infidels, but are all become wits; they entirely ſupport converſation by antitheſis, and epigram. This is a miracle worked by you. What is raiſing of the dead, comparatively to beſtowing the charms of imagination on thoſe to whom they have been refuſed by nature! There is no blundering tale, in France, the hero of which is not a Swiſs; and in Germany, though we have

not the character of the brighteſt of nations, we ſtill ridicule the Helvetic tribes. You have effected a total change. Wherever you reſide you create. You are the Prometheus of Geneva. Had you but remained here, we ſhould at preſent have been ſomething. That fatality, which preſides over human events, was unwilling we ſhould enjoy advantages ſo great.

Scarcely had you quitted your country before the belles-lettres began to languiſh; and I fear leſt mathematics will blight, in France, thoſe few buds which might be reproductive of the fine arts. Good taſte was interred, at Rome, in the tombs of Virgil, Ovid, and Horace. I fear leſt France, loſing you, will undergo the fate of that ſovereign city.

Happen what will, I have been your cotemporary; you will live as long as I ſhall; and I trouble myſelf little concerning the taſte, the ſterility, or the fruitfulneſs of future ages.

Adieu. Cultivate your garden, for nothing can be more ſage.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCXCVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, February 1, 1766.

I RETURN you my thanks very tardily; the reaſon of which is, I was on the point of never returning them. The ſevere winter has almoſt killed me. I was preparing to go in ſearch of Bayle, and to congratulate him on having an editor who has even more reputation than himſelf, and of more than one kind. He would certainly have joked with me, when he ſhould have ſeen that your majeſty has treated him as he was treated by Jurieu, and has left out the article *David*. The work I perceive has been printed from the ſecond edition of Bayle. It were a pity that David ſhould not have all the juſtice which is David's due. He was a moſt abominable Jew, himſelf and his pſalms. I am acquainted with a more potent and more generous king than he was; who, to my taſte, has written better poetry; who has not made the hills dance like rams, and the rams like little hills; who has not ſaid it is good to daſh out the brains of children againſt the ſtones, in the name of the Lord; and who does not conti-

nually talk of aſpics and baſiliſks. What pleaſes me, in my king, is that, among all his epiſtles, there is not one falſe thought: his imagination never wanders.

The predominant quality of his mind is preciſion; and, in effect, without preciſion there is neither mind nor talent.

I take the liberty to ſend him a flint of the Rhine, in return for a buſhel of diamonds. Such, with him, is the only barter I can make. The devotees of Verſailles have not been very well ſatisfied with the little confidence I place in Saint Genevieve; but the philoſophic monarch will take my part.

Since the adventures of Neufchatel have excited a laugh, I here ſend others which I hope may afford you amuſement. As grave affairs are now in agitation, in one of your provinces, it is but juſt they ſhould be brought to the tribunal of your reaſon.

There is a new proſecution in France, very ſimilar to that of Calas; and a memorial will ſoon appear, ſigned by ſeveral advocates, which may raiſe curioſity, and excite compaſſion. It will appear, our papiſts are ſtill perſuaded that the proteſtants murder their children, that they may pleaſe their God. Should your majeſty wiſh to have this memorial, let me entreat you

to

to inform me how it muſt be addreſſed to you. I know not whether I ought to put it in the poſt, or ſend it by the German ſtage-waggons.

LETTER CCXCVIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 25, 1766.

I SHOULD have been vexed to have heard you were ſo ſoon gone to keep company with Bayle. Be in no haſte to make this journey; but recollect that you are the ornament of French literature, in an age when literature begins to decline. But you will live long. Your old age is like the infancy of Hercules, who ſtrangled ſerpents in his cradle: you, though loaded with years, ſtrangle the *infamous* ——.

Your verſes on the death of the Dauphin are beautiful. I think they have attacked Saint Genevieve mal-apropos, becauſe the queen, and half the court, made ridiculous vows, in caſe the Dauphin ſhould recover. You no doubt are not ignorant of the holy converſation of the biſhop of Beauvais with God, who anſwered him—"We "ſhall ſee what can be done."

In thoſe ages when biſhops converſed with

God, and queens went on pilgrimage, the bones of girls were in higher eſteem than the ſtatues of heroes. Philoſophers and poets were then treated with contempt. The progreſs of human reaſon is more ſlow than is imagined; the true cauſe of which is, that almoſt all men are ſatisfied with vague notions of things, and but few have time to ſpare for examination, and deep enquiry. Some, enchained by ſuperſtition from their infancy, wiſh not, or are unable, to break their chains; others, delighting in frivolity, know not a word of mathematics, and enjoy life without ſuffering their pleaſures to be interrupted by a moment's reflection. To theſe add the timid-minded, and ſilly women, and the ſum total will form all ſociety. Should one thinking man in a thouſand be diſcovered, it will be much; for him, you, and men like you, write; the reſt are offended, and moſt charitably conſign you over to Satan. I, who do not take offence, ſhall make good uſe of the memorial of your advocates, and of ſuch excellent pieces as you may be pleaſed to ſend me.

I believe all correſpondence from Swiſſerland muſt paſs through Franckfort on the Main, on its road to Berlin; not that I am very certain.

Had you but made ſome reſidence at Neufchatel, you would have inſpired the holy cohort

with

with a ſpirit of moderation: but at preſent this canton is Bœotia, when compared to Ferney, and to the places you inhabit. For our parts, we are but Laplanders; yet do not forget theſe Laplanders, who love your works, and are intereſted in your welfare.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCXCIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, Auguſt 7, 1766.

MY nephew informed me, by letter, that he propoſed to viſit the philoſopher of Ferney, on his journey. I envy him the pleaſure he enjoyed, while liſtening to you. My name was ſuperfluous in your converſations; and you had ſo many topics, on which to treat, that there was no neceſſity to have recourſe to the philoſopher of Sans-Souci for aid.

You mention a colony of philoſophers, who propoſe to ſettle in Cleves. To this I am not averſe. I can grant them every thing they aſk, wood excepted; for the foreſts here were almoſt deſtroyed during the reſidence of their countrymen. I muſt premiſe, however, that thoſe to whom

whom reſpect is due muſt be reſpected; and that, when they print, they muſt be reſpectful of decorum in their publications.

The ſcene which has been acted at Abbeville is tragical; but have thoſe who have been puniſhed been guilty of no fault? Ought the prejudices which time has rendered ſacred, in the minds of the vulgar, to be openly inſulted? Or, if we wiſh to enjoy freedom of thought, ought we to mock at the eſtabliſhed belief? He who remains quiet is ſeldom perſecuted. Recollect the ſaying of Fontenelle—"Had I my hand "full of truths, I would think twice before I "would open it."

The vulgar do not merit information; and, if your parliaments have acted cruelly againſt the unfortunate young man who ſtruck the ſign which the Chriſtians revere, as the ſymbol of their ſalvation, accuſe the laws of the kingdom*. According to theſe laws each magiſtrate makes an oath to judge; he cannot pronounce ſentence but in obedience to them; nor is there any re-

* There was no law exiſting in France, by which the chevalier de la Barre could be condemned: this is proved, becauſe none of the members of that court which his ſentence has overwhelmed with ſhame have ventured to cite ſuch law. True it is they have ſuppoſed its exiſtence; but this proves either a diſgraceful ignorance of the laws, or fanaticiſm inflamed to madneſs.

ſource

ſource for the accuſed, except that of proving that he is not in the predicament of the law.

Should you aſk me whether I would have pronounced ſo rigorous a ſentence, I anſwer, No; but that, according to the knowledge I poſſeſs, I ſhould have proportioned the puniſhment to the crime. You have broken a ſtatue; I condemn you to erect another. You have not taken off your hat, in preſence of the parſon of the pariſh, who carried you know what *; I therefore condemn you to ſtand fifteen ſucceſſive days in church without a hat. You have read the works of Voltaire; and for this offence, youth, know it is proper to form your judgment; to which effect I enjoin you to ſtudy the ſummary of St. Thomas, and the aſs-guide of the good curate. The thoughtleſs culprit would thus perhaps have been more ſeverely puniſhed than he has been by his judges; for languor is an age, death a moment.

May heaven or fate remove this death from your imagination! And may you continue, mildly and peaceably, to enlighten the age you illuſtrate! Should you come to Cleves, I ſhall again have the pleaſure to ſee you, and to aſſure you of the admiration with which your genius has always inſpired me.

* Meaning the hoſt. T.

On

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCC.

From the King.

Potſdam, Auguſt 13, 1766.

I IMAGINE you have already received my anſwer, to your laſt letter; but I own I cannot think the execution at Abbeville ſo horrible as the death of Calas. The latter was innocent; a victim ſacrificed to fanaticiſm; nor was there any circumſtance, of that atrocious action, by which the judges could ſtand excuſed. Far the reverſe; they departed from forms in their proceedings; and condemned to death, without proof, conviction, or witneſſes.

What has juſt happened at Abbeville is of a very different nature. You will not deny that every citizen ought to conform to the laws of his country. There are puniſhments, appointed by lawgivers, for thoſe who diſturb the religion of the nation: diſcretion, decency, and eſpecially that reſpect which every citizen owes to the laws, oblige us not to inſult the eſtabliſh-

ed

ed worſhip, and to avoid offence and inſolence. Reformation ſhould begin with theſe ſanguinary laws, and the puniſhment be proportionate to the crime; but, while they ſhall remain in all their rigour, magiſtrates are under an obligation to pronounce judgment accordingly.

The bigots of France exclaim againſt the philoſophers, and accuſe them of being the cauſe of all the evil which has happened. During the laſt war, there were madmen who pretended the Encyclopedie was the cauſe of the misfortunes ſuſtained by the armies of France. While this effervescence continued, the miniſtry of Verſailles were in want of money; which being promiſed by the clergy, they ſacrificed the philoſophers, who, not having money, had none to give.

I, who aſk neither money nor benedictions, offer an aſylum to philoſophers; provided they will be prudent, and remain as pacific as the fine title which they aſſume to themſelves leads us to ſuppoſe: for all the truths they announce are not equivalent to peace of mind; which is the only good men can enjoy, on the atom of earth which they inhabit. For my part, being a reaſoner without enthuſiaſm, it is my wiſh that men ſhould be reaſonable; and eſpecially that they ſhould be peaceable.

We

We know the crimes which the fanaticiſm of religion has occaſioned; let us beware how we introduce fanaticiſm into philoſophy, the characteriſtics of which ought to be mildneſs and moderation. Philoſophy ought to pity the tragical end of a youth who was guilty of extravagance; ſhe ought to demonſtrate the rigour of a law made in rude and ignorant ages: but ſhe ought not herſelf to encourage ſimilar acts; nor ought ſhe to affront the judges, who were unable to pronounce ſentence otherwiſe than they did. Socrates did not adore the *Dii majores et minores gentium*; yet he was preſent at public ſacrifices. Gaſſendi went to maſs, and Newton to hear ſermons.

Toleration, in ſociety, ought to ſupport each individual in the liberty of thinking as he ſhall pleaſe; but toleration ought not to be extended ſo as to authoriſe the effrontery and licentiouſneſs of young blockheads, who audaciouſly inſult that which the people revere. Such are my ſentiments, which are conformable to the ſecurity of liberty and public ſafety, the firſt objects of all legiſlation.

I will venture a wager that, while you read, you will think—"This is very like a German, "and partakes much of the phlegm of a nation "that

" that never felt more than the firſt emotions of " paſſion."

True it is that, compared to the French, we are but a kind of vegetables; for which reaſon we have neither produced the Jeruſalem Delivered nor the Henriade. We have continued much as we were, ever ſince the emperor Charlemagne thought proper to make Chriſtians of us, by cutting our throats. Perhaps our cloudy ſkies, and the ſeverity of our long winters, contribute to produce this effect.

In fine, you muſt take us as we are. Ovid ſoon accuſtomed himſelf to the manners of the people of Tomis; and I have vain glory enough to perſuade myſelf that the province of Cleves is of more worth than the place where the Danube pours its waters, from its ſeven mouths, into the Black Sea.

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCI.

From the King.

Breſlau, September 1, 1766.

YOU will have read, in my preceding letter, that peaceable philoſophers may expect to be well received in my ſtates. I have not ſeen the ſon of the modern Hippocrates, nor have I ſpoken to him. I know not what can have tranſpired of the deſign of your philoſophers; I waſh my hands of it. I am here in a province where phyſics are preferred to metaphyſics. The people cultivate their lands; they have rebuilt eight hundred houſes; and they bring forth ſome thouſands of children, annually, to replace thoſe which the phrenzy of politics, and of war, cauſed to periſh.

I know not whether, all things well conſidered, it be not more advantageous to labour at population than to write bad arguments. The lord and the peaſant, occupied in their own re-eſtabliſhment, live in peace; and they are ſo buſied, by their own work, that no perſon pays attention to the religion of his neighbour. The ſparks of religious hatred, which often were blown up before the war, are extinct; and the

ſpirit of toleration daily gains ground, in the opinions of the inhabitants. Believe me, indolence gives birth to moſt diſputes. That ſuch may be extinguiſhed in France, you need but renew the times of the defeats of Poictiers and Agincourt. Your eccleſiaſtics, and your parliaments, buſily employed in their own affairs, would think on them only, and would leave both the public and the government in peace. This is a propoſition which may be made to theſe gentlemen; but I doubt much of their approbation.

Your works are common here; they are in the hands of every body. There is no region, no nation, that has not heard your name; nor is there any poliſhed ſociety in which your fame is not reſplendent. Enjoy this fame, and enjoy it long.

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCII.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, September 13, 1766.

YOU have no need to recommend philoſophers to me; they ſhall all be well received, provided they be moderate and peaceable. I cannot give them what I have not, for I have not the gift of working miracles; nor can I raiſe up the wood of the park of Cleves, which the French have hewn down and burnt; but they ſhall there find an aſylum, and ſafety.

I recollect having read, in the book which you mentioned to me, that it was printed at Berne. The people of Berne have conſequently exerciſed a legal juriſdiction over the work. They have burnt councils, controverſies, fanatics, and popes*; which I, as a heretic, very much applaud. Theſe were but trifles, in compariſon with what has juſt paſſed at Abbeville. To throw paper into the fire is only ill humour, but to roaſt men is no joke.

You ought, by way of repriſal, to make an

* It is ſcarcely neceſſary to ſay that the *writings* of popes, &c. are meant. T.

auto-de-fe at Ferney, and to condemn all works on theology and controverſy, produced in your neighbourhood, to the flames; collecting round the bonfire divines of every ſect, to regale them with the pleaſing ſpectacle. I, whoſe faith is lukewarm, I tolerate every one, on condition that I myſelf may be tolerated; nor do I concern myſelf with the faith of others.

Your miſſionaries will open the eyes of the youth who may read their works, or frequent their company. But how many blockheads are there, in the world, who do not think! How many are there who addict themſelves to pleaſure, and whom thinking fatigues! How many ambitious men, whoſe thoughts are all engaged by their projects! Of this great number, how few are there who delight in forming and enlightening their minds! The thick fog which blinded men, in the tenth and thirteenth centuries, is diſſipated. Yet moſt eyes are ſhort-ſighted, and ſome eyelids abſolutely cloſed.

In France you have the Convulſioniſts; here we have the Pietiſts; elſewhere there are other fools. Bigots are a ſpecies that will endure while the earth ſhall exiſt: like as ſterile oaks are found in foreſts, and drones among bees.

Believe me, were philoſophers to form a government, the people in fifty years would forge

new ſuperſtitions, and would annex ſome object of worſhip which ſhould ſtrike the ſenſes. They would either make little idols, worſhip at the tombs of their founders, invoke the ſun, or would ſuffer ſome ſimilar abſurdity to prevail over the religion of the One Supreme Being.

Superſtition is a weakneſs of the human mind, in which it is inherent; it ever has been ſo, and ſo ſhall ever remain. Objects of adoration may change, like faſhions in France; but of what importance is it to me whether men proſtrate themſelves before a bit of dough, the ox Apis, the arch of alliance, or a ſtatue? The choice is a matter of indifference; the ſuperſtition is the ſame, and reaſon is no gainer.

But to be in good health at the age of ſeventy, to have the mind unembarraſſed, and to remain the ornament of Parnaſſus as in early youth, are not things of indifference. This deſtiny is yours; may you long continue to enjoy it, and may you be as happy as human nature can be!

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCCIII.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, November 3, 1766.

I AM not the only perſon who remarks that talents and genius are more uncommon in France and in Europe, in our times, than they were at the cloſe of the preceding age. You have ſtill three poets; De la Harpe, Marmontel, and Saint Lambert; but they are only of the ſecond order. The injuſtice, however, which has been committed at Abbeville, need not prevent a Pariſian of genius from writing a good tragedy.

It is certainly horrible to murder the innocent with the ſword of the law; but the nation bluſhes at the deed, and government will no doubt think how ſuch abuſes may be prevented. It muſt further be conſidered that, the more vaſt a kingdom is, the more is it expoſed to the abuſe of that authority which is entruſted to ſubalterns. The only means of preventing this would be, to oblige all the tribunals of the kingdom not to execute ſentence of death, till a ſupreme council ſhould have reviewed the proceedings, and confirmed the decree.

It ſeems to me that the young poet, author of the Triumvirate, is no more than ſeventy-three; and I judge thus, becauſe a beginner neither perceives nor underſtands ſhades ſo fine as thoſe of the character of Octavius; and becauſe the two acts which I have read have no declamation, but a ſimplicity which only pleaſes after all the fuſtian of rhetoric has been exhauſted. Be it even ſuppoſed that a young man had written the work, it has certainly been retouched, and new moulded, by a ſage. You have ſent me too much and too little to ſtop, after ſo fine a beginning. I compare you to kings, from whom it is difficult to obtain a firſt favour; but, that granted, they are in the habit of continuing their gifts.

I have read your article Julian with pleaſure; yet I could have wiſhed you had been more tender with your abbé *De la Bletterie:* bigot and Janſeniſt though he be, he was the firſt to render homage to truth; he did juſtice, though with ſuch reſtrictions as it was proper for him to obſerve, to the character of Julian. He did not call him an apoſtate, and we ought not to forget the ſincerity of a Janſeniſt. I think it would have been more artful to have beſtowed praiſe on him; like as we encourage a child that

begins

begins to liſp out a word, that he may learn to ſpeak.

The paſſage of Ammianus Marcellinus is, no doubt, an interpolation; of which to convince yourſelf, you need but read the context, before and after; the two divided phraſes are ſo well connected that the fraud becomes evident. Thoſe were good times, thoſe firſt ages of Chriſtianity; they adapted works to their own taſte. Joſephus is a proof in point. The Goſpel according to Saint John ſtill remains.

What aſtoniſhes me is that theſe gentlemen correctors did not perceive certain incongruities, which they might have rectified with a ſcratch of the pen; ſuch as the double genealogy; the prophecy you mention; the numerous errors in the names of towns, and geography, &c. &c. Works which are ſealed with the mark of humanity, that is to ſay, with blunders, inconſiſtencies, and contradictions, muſt betray themſelves. The degradation of the human ſpecies, during ſo many ages, has prolonged the fanaticiſm. You have been the Bellerophon, who have vanquiſhed Chimæra.

Live, therefore, to finiſh your work, and diſpel remaining clouds. Yet fail not to remember that repoſe, and tranquillity of mind, are the ſole good we can enjoy, during our pilgri-

mage; and that no ſpecies of glory can equal them. This good I wiſh you; and ſwear, by Epicurus and Ariſtides, that no one of your admirers is more intereſted in your happineſs than I am.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCIV.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, November 5, 1766.

THE extract from Bayle's Dictionary, which you have mentioned, is before me; I was employed in making it at a time when I was buſied by many affairs, the effects of which the edition feels. A new one is at preſent preparing, in which the article *courtezans* will be replaced by thoſe of Ovid and Lucretius; and the good article on David reſtored.

I ſend you, according to your wiſhes, this unformed extract, which does not equal my intention. It will be followed by the new edition, as ſoon as it ſhall be finiſhed. But theſe are only ſlight fillips on the noſe, which I beſtow on the *infamous* ——. To cruſh, muſt be left to you.

This

This *infamous* —— has met with the common fate of proſtitutes; ſhe was courted while young, but in her decrepitude ſhe is now expoſed to inſult. The marquis d'Argens has rather ill-treated her, in his Julian. This work is leſs incorrect than the others; but I was not, however, ſatisfied with the ſally which he for no reaſon made againſt Maupertuis. The aſhes of the dead ought not to be diſturbed. What glory can accrue from attacking a man whom death has diſarmed? Maupertuis no doubt has written a bad work; has treated a laughable ſubject in a ſerious manner: he might have laughed himſelf, and thus not have impoſed upon any one. You underſtood the thing in heroics, ſeriouſly attacked a trifle, and with your formidable Herculean club you cruſhed a fly.

Wiſhing to preſerve peace in the houſe, I did all I could to prevent you from breaking out into a paſſion.

You have loſt nothing by quitting this country; you are now at Ferney, in company with your niece, employed as you wiſh, reſpected as the god of the fine arts, and the patriarch of infidels, and covered with glory, of which you are in the full enjoyment during life: being at the diſtance of more than a hundred leagues from

from Paris, you are conſidered as dead, and have juſtice done you.

But what can induce you to aſk me for poetry? Did ever Pluto ſend to Vulcan for a ſupply of gold? Who ever ſaw Thetis ſolicit the Rubicon for its ſmall ſtream? Since, at the time when kings and emperors were bent on my deſtruction, a wretch in alliance with them robbed me of my book—ſince, I ſay, this book has appeared, I ſend you a copy in large print. Should your niece dreſs her hair *à la Grecque*, or *à l'éclipſe* *, it will ſerve her to put it up in papers.

It is not long ſince an Engliſhman who had ſeen you paſſed through this place, and told me that you began to ſtoop, but that the Promethean fire did not fail. This is the oil of the lamp, and will preſerve you. You will live to the age of Fontenelle, continuing to laugh at thoſe who have granted you annuities; and will write an epigram when you have arrived at your hundredth year. In fine, loaded with years, ſatiated with fame, and victor over the *infamous* ——, I behold you aſcending Olympus; ſuſtained by the ſhades of Lucretius, Sophocles, Virgil, and Locke; and ſeated, between Newton and Epicurus, in a tranſparent cloud.

* See note to Letter cxlviii. vol. xii. p. 49. T.

Think

Think of me when you enter into glory; and ſay, like him whom you know, "This night "ſhalt thou be ſeated at my table."

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

LETTER CCCV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, January 5, 1767.

I KNEW your muſe would, ſoon or late, wake from her ſlumbers. I am not ignorant that other men will be aſtoniſhed to find, after ſo long and ſo hot a war, occupied by the care of reſtoring your kingdom to order, governing without miniſters, and entering into all details, you yet are able to write French poetry. But I am not ſurpriſed, becauſe I have the honour to know you. I will, however, own I am aſtoniſhed to find your poetry is good, after ſo many years interruption; this was more than I expected. Strong and nervous thoughts, a juſt retroſpect of the weakneſſes of men, true and profound ideas, have at all times been your inheritance: but to poſſeſs numbers and harmony, and even very often delicacy

delicacy of expreſſion, three hundred leagues from Paris, in the March of Brandenburg—theſe form a phenomenon which ought certainly to be remarked by our Academy of Paris.

Do you know, ſire, that your majeſty is become an author to be picked and plucked?

Our dean of the Academy, my fat abbé d'Olivet, in his new edition of French Proſody, has lately criticiſed your uſe of the word *crêpe*; from which you have unpiteouſly retrenched the laſt *e*, in a letter addreſſed to me, and printed in the works of the philoſopher of Sans-Souci. But I do not think the edition was printed under your own inſpection. Be that as it will, you are become a claſſic author; examined by our dean, like Racine; cited before our worthy tribunal; and condemned, without appeal, to make two ſyllables of the word *crêpe*. I take up arms with the dean, and am going to make a very contrary accuſation againſt the philoſopher of Sans-Souci. You have allowed two ſyllables to the word *hait*, in your excellent Eſſay on the Stoic—

Votre goût offenſé *haït* l'abſinthe amère *.

We cannot forgive you this. The verb *haïr* (to hate) never muſt be pronounced in two

* Your offended taſte hates the bitter abſinthus.

ſyllables,

ſyllables, in the indicative; *je hais, tu hais, il hait*, &c. In vain would you go to war again and beat us.

> The treach'rous treaties we may *hate*
> Of blund'ring miniſters of ſtate;
> Or *hate* the politics of thoſe
> Whoſe cunning bids them join our foes;
> And thus, to ſerve their private ends,
> Ruin both themſelves and friends.

But never will we pronounce the word *hait* in two ſyllables. Come to a determination, ſire; and have the goodneſs to correct this line, which you can do with ſo much eaſe.

Whither is that time fled, ſire, in which I had the happineſs to make dots over the *ii* at Sans-Souci and at Potſdam? I can aſſure you thoſe two years were the moſt agreeable of my life. I have had the misfortune to build a country houſe on the frontiers of France, for which I am very repentant. The Patagonians, pitch, an enthuſiaſtic imagination, and the hole through which to deſcend directly to the centre of the earth *, have driven me from my *true centre*. I have paid dearly for this hole. For you was I formed. I finiſh my life, in my ſmall and obſcure ſphere, exactly as you paſs yours amid your grandeur and your glory. I am

* Theſe all are alluſions to Maupertuis. T.

acquainted

acquainted only with ſolitude and labour: my companions conſiſt of five or ſix people, who leave me entirely at my liberty, and whom I treat in the ſame manner; for ſociety without freedom is torture. I am but your merry andrew, in what relates to ſociety and the belles-lettres.

I have lately had a very ſlight apoplectic attack, which was occaſioned by my own fault. We generally are the authors of our own miſfortunes. This accident has prevented me from anſwering your majeſty as ſoon as I could have wiſhed.

The devil has broken looſe in Geneva. The perſons who wiſhed to retire to Cleves remain. Half of the council and its partiſans are fled. The French ambaſſador has departed incognito, and is come to take refuge with me. I was obliged to lend him my horſes to return to Soleure. The philoſophers who intended to have emigrated are very much perplexed; they can ſell none of their effects; all trade is at an end, all the banks are ſhut up. They write, however, to the baron von Verder, conformable to the permiſſion granted by your majeſty; but I can foreſee nothing can take place ſooner than the end of winter.

I wait with the moſt lively gratitude for the twelve

twelve excellent Prefaces *; an ineſtimable monument of bold and firm reaſon †, which ought to ſerve as a leſſon to philoſophers.

You are very much in the right, ſire; a courageous and ſage prince, poſſeſſed of money, men, and laws, may very well govern kingdoms without the aid of religion, which is formed only for deceit. But the ſilly multitude would ſoon invent a religion for themſelves; and, ſo long as knaves and fools ſhall exiſt, religions there will be. Ours, paſt contradiction, is the moſt ridiculous, the moſt abſurd, and the moſt ſanguinary, of any with which the world was ever infected.

Your majeſty will render an eternal ſervice to the human race, by deſtroying this infamous ſuperſtition; I do not ſay among the mob, who are unworthy to be enlightened, and who are formed for every kind of ſlavery; but among the worthy; among men who think, or who are deſirous to think. The number of theſe is very great: and it is for you to afford food for their

* Twelve copies of the Preface inſerted by the king before an Abridgment of Fleuri's Eccleſiaſtic Hiſtory, in two volumes, 12mo. printed at Berne, 1767.

† The text does not determine whether the Preface or the Abridgment be the ineſtimable monument; but I ſuppoſe the former. T.

minds;

minds; it is for you to give the children of the family white bread, and to leave the brown for dogs. I am only afflicted, at the approach of death, by the deep regret of finding myſelf unable to ſecond you in this noble enterprize; it is the moſt dignified, the moſt reſpectable, that ever diſtinguiſhed the human mind.

The Alcides of Germany as you are, become its Neſtor; live thrice man's age, that you may cruſh the head of the hydra.

LETTER CCCVI.

From the King.

Berlin, January 16, 1767.

I HAVE read all the pieces you have ſent me, and think the Triumvirate full of beautiful paſſages. Thoſe againſt the *infamous* —— are ſo ſtrong, that nothing equally ſtriking has been publiſhed ſince the days of Celſus. The work of Boulanger * is ſuperior to the other, and more adapted to men of the world, whoſe minds are fatigued by long deductions; relaxed

* Some of the philoſophic works of M. de Voltaire were at firſt publiſhed under the names of Boulanger, Fréret, Bolingbroke, &c.

and extenuate as they are by their trifling purſuits.

There is no refuge left for the phantom of error; he has been flagellated on every ſide, and ſmote on both cheeks. I perceive his wounds, wherever I examine; nor do I find empyrics haſtening to alleviate his ſufferings. It is time to pronounce his funeral oration, and to hide him in the earth. You have broken the ſpell, and the illuſion vaniſhes into air.

I do not think it will be thus with the inteſtine troubles of Geneva. From the public papers I augur that we approach a cataſtrophe, which will occaſion a revolution in the government, or ſome bloody tragedy——

Let what will happen, the unfortunate will find a ready aſylum there where they wiſh; they have only to determine on the time when they mean to profit by this place of refuge.

The court of France treats theſe people with unheard-of haughtineſs; and I own I have found it difficult to conceive why its preſent deciſion ſhould be ſo dogmatically oppoſite to that which it gave, on the ſame affair, thirty years ago. What was juſt then muſt be ſo now; the laws on which the republic is founded are not changed; conſequently the judgment ought to be the

ſame. Such is the opinion of the North on this affair.

Perhaps, in the South, commentaries are made on the freedom of ceſſions, which is ſolicited in behalf of the diſſidents. I wrap myſelf up in the *comparſa* *, and have refuſed to act any principal part in that ſcene. The kings of England and of the North have made the ſame determination. The empreſs of Ruſſia muſt decide the quarrel with the republic of Poland how ſhe can. Poliſh diſſenſions and Italian negociations are nearly of the ſame kind. A man muſt live long, and poſſeſs celeſtial patience, to ſee the end of them.

In the mean time, I wiſh you a happy new year, health, tranquillity, and content; and may Apollo, the god of verſe and of phyſic, heap his two-fold favours upon you. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

* From the Italian —— *appearances*, or a *mute* in a tragedy. T.

LET-

LETTER CCCVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 10, 1767.

THE accident which has befallen you excites ſorrow in all thoſe who have heard of it; but we flatter ourſelves it will be attended with no ill conſequences. You ſcarcely poſſeſs a material body, you are nothing but mind; and that mind triumphs over the diſeaſes and infirmities of nature, which it vivifies.

I congratulate you on the advantages which the people of Geneva have obtained, over the council of the two hundred, and the mediators. Apparently, however, the ſucceſs will be temporary, and not of long duration. The Canton of Berne and the Moſt Chriſtian King are hobgoblins, that wantonly devour ſmall republics. They ſuffer not offence with impunity; and, ſhould the monſters be put out of temper, it will be all over with the Rome of John Calvin. Secondary cauſes muſt determine; I wiſh they may turn to the advantage of the citizens, who, in my opinion, have right on their ſide. In caſe of misfortune, they will find the aſylum

which they requeſt, and ſuch advantages as they wiſh.

I thank you for correcting my verſes, and will make good uſe of your remarks. Poetry is to me a recreation. I know how confined is the talent I poſſeſs: but it is an habitual pleaſure, which to deprive myſelf of would be painful, and which is of injury to no one; eſpecially as the poetry which I write will never weary the public, by whom it will never be ſeen.

I ſend you two more tales; they are written in a different ſtyle, which I have attempted in order to vary the monotony of grave ſubjects, by light and pleaſant thoughts.

I imagine you muſt have received as many copies of the abridgment of Fleuri as could be procured from the bookſeller.

The Jeſuits perhaps may effect their baniſhment from Spain. They have interfered in what did not concern them; and the court pretends to know that they have endeavoured to raiſe a ſedition among the people.

Here, in my neighbourhood, the empreſs of Ruſſia declares herſelf the protectreſs of the diſſidents; at which the Poliſh biſhops are enraged. What an unhappy age is this for the court of Rome! It is openly attacked in Poland, and its body guards are expelled from France

France and Portugal. It ſhould ſeem that the ſame favour will be done them in Spain.

Philoſophers openly ſap the foundation of the apoſtolic throne; they laugh at the conjuring book of the magician; they beſpatter the author of the ſect; they preach toleration, and all is loſt. A miracle will be neceſſary for the recovery of the church. She it is who has been ſeized with a moſt dreadful fit of apoplexy; and you will yet live to have the conſolation to bury her, and write her epitaph, as you formerly did that of the Sorbonne.

The Engliſhman, Woolſton, according to his calculation, prolongs the duration of the *infamous* —— to this time two hundred years. But he was unable to calculate (or foreſee) all which has recently happened—the deſtruction of prejudice, which is the corner ſtone of the edifice. It is crumbling away, and its fall is haſtening.

The work was begun by Bayle; it was continued by numerous Engliſhmen; and you were reſerved for its completion.

Long may you peacefully enjoy all the various kinds of laurel with which you are crowned! Long may you enjoy your glory, and the rare happineſs of ſeeing the rays of your ſetting ſun as ſplendid as thoſe at its riſing were!

I hope this ſetting ſun will be long before it goes down; and in this I aſſure you I am one of thoſe who are moſt intereſted.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCVIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 20, 1767.

I AM glad that the book which it was ſo difficult to find here, is ſafely arrived, ſince you wiſhed to have it. The poor abbé Fleuri, its author, has had the vexation to ſee it inſerted in the index * of the court of Rome. The hiſtory of the church, it muſt be confeſſed, is a ſubject more proper to afford cauſe of ſcandal than of edification.

The author of the preface with good right maintains that the actions of men are viſible, in the whole conduct of the prieſts; who have altered the Chriſtian religion, holy in itſelf, from council to council; have overloaded it with articles of faith; have made it conſiſt entirely in external practices; and finally have injured

* See note to page 102, Vol. XI. T.

morality

morality by their indulgences and diſpenſations, which ſeem to have been invented only to free mankind from the load of virtue. As if virtue were not abſolutely neceſſary for all ſociety! And as if any religion could be tolerated, that ſhould become the enemy of good morality!

There is matter enough to fill volumes on this ſubject; and the little rivulets which I may ſupply, will loſe themſelves in the immenſe lakes and vaſt ſeas of your lordſhip of Ferney. To write to you on this topic would be to carry crows to Athens *.

I now come to your poor Geneveſe. According to what is affirmed in the public papers, your miniſtry of Verſailles ſeem to be ſoftened on the ſubject; and, for the good of humanity, I hope they are. Why change the laws of a people who wiſh their preſervation? Why deceive? No great glory will certainly accrue to France, for having oppreſſed a poor neighbouring republic. Let her attack the Engliſh, by fighting with whom there is reputation to be won; for they are a haughty people, and underſtand the art of ſelf defence.

I know not whether the eſtabliſhment of a

* A proverbial expreſſion, originating, as I imagine, in the crow being the ſymbol of Apollo. T.

bank in France will be ſucceſsful: the plan is good; but I, who ſee things at a diſtance, and who may deceive myſelf, do not think they have choſen a proper opportunity for carrying it into execution. Credit is neceſſary for the forming a bank; and, according to popular report, the government is in want of credit.

I thank you for the manner in which you have defended my barbariſms, and ſoleciſms, againſt the abbé d'Olivet. You are one of thoſe great orators who can render every cauſe a good one. Were you to undertake the thing, you might inſpire me with vanity enough to make me ſuppoſe myſelf infallible, like one of the forty. So ineſtimable is the art of perſuaſion!

I wiſh I were poſſeſſed of this art, that I might perſuade the Poles to be tolerant. I wiſh the diſſidents were happy; but happy without enthuſiaſm, and ſo as to give the republic ſatisfaction. I know not what the king of Poland may think, but I imagine the whole might be adjuſted by gentle means; that is, by moderating the pretenſions of the one, and by inducing the other to relax from their ſeverity.

The Holy Father has ſent a brief into that country; the ſubject of which is the glory of martyrdom, the miraculous aſſiſtance of God, fire, ſword, obſtinacy, zeal, &c. &c. The Holy Ghoſt

Ghoſt has inſpired him very ill, ſo as to make him commit every kind of blunder, ſince his pontificate. Of what good therefore is inſpiration?

We have a Poliſh counteſs here, whoſe name is Grazinſka, and who is a kind of phenomenon. She has a decided love for literatuae, and has ſtudied the Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and Engliſh languages; has read all the claſſic authors of each tongue, and retains what ſhe has read. The ſoul of a Benedictine has taken its reſidence in her body; ſhe has wit notwithſtanding, and has nothing againſt her except a difficulty in expreſſing her thoughts in French, for ſhe does not ſpeak ſo well as ſhe underſtands this language. With recommendations like theſe, you may judge whether ſhe did or did not meet a good reception. Her converſation and her ideas are connected, nor has ſhe any of the frivolity of her ſex. What is moſt aſtoniſhing is, that ſhe has formed herſelf without any aid. She has paſſed three winters at Berlin, with men of letters; following that irreſiſtible inclination by which ſhe is hurried away.

I preach up her example to all our ladies, who might form their minds with much more facility than could this Poliſh counteſs; but they are unacquainted with the felicity of thoſe who

who cultivate literature; and, becauſe the pleaſure is not of the ecſtatic kind, they do not think it pleaſure. You, in your preſent advanced age, owe the happieſt moments of your life to letters. When every other pleaſure is fled, that remains: it is the faithful companion of all ages, and of all fortunes.

May you long enjoy it, for the good of theſe very letters, for the enlightening of the blind, and for the defence of my barbariſm! Such is the wiſh of my heart. *Vale*,

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 28, 1767.

I CONGRATULATE Europe on the productions with which you have enriched her inhabitants for more than fifty years; and I wiſh you to live as many years longer as the amount of the whole duration of Fleuri, Fontenelle, and Neſtor. With you will end the age of Louis XIV; of which epocha, ſo fruitful in great men, you are the laſt. A diſguſt for the belles lettres, a ſenſe of ſatiety for thoſe maſterly works

works which the human mind has produced, and a ſpirit of calculation—ſuch is the temper of the times!

Among the crowd of men of wit with whom France abounds, I diſcover none of thoſe creative minds, thoſe men of true genius, who are diſcovered by their ſublime beauties, their ſplendid paſſages, and even by their wanderings. All at preſent is analyſed. The French pique themſelves on being profound; their books ſeem to be the productions of unimpaſſioned reaſoners; and thoſe graces which are ſo natural to them they now neglect.

One of the beſt performances which I have long read is the Brief in behalf of Calas, written by ſome advocate whoſe name I do not recollect. This brief abounds in traits of true eloquence, and I think the author worthy to walk in the footſteps of Boſſuet; not as a theologian, but as an orator. You are ſurrounded with orators, who harangue with fixed bayonets, and loaded cartouch-boxes. Your neighbourhood is a diſagreeable one, for a philoſopher who lives in retirement; and ſtill more ſo for the people of Geneva.

This recals to my mind the tale of a Swiſs, who had eaten eggs and bacon on a faſt day; and who, hearing it thunder, exclaimed—"Good "God!

"God! What a noiſe is here about eggs and "bacon!" The people of Geneva might exclaim in like manner, addreſſing themſelves to Louis XV. The end of this blockade will not be to the advantage of the people; the moſt judicious thing they could do would be to ſubmit to preſent circumſtances, and come to an accommodation. Should obſtinacy and animoſity prevent them from ſo doing, their laſt reſource is the aſylum which I am preparing for them, and which is in a place that you have very properly imagined to be very convenient.

I know nothing of the young man whom you mentioned to me. I ſhall enquire whether there be any perſon at Weſel of the name; and, ſhould there be ſuch a perſon, your recommendation will not be ineffectual.

We have ſeen three ſucceſſive ſentences, which are very diſgraceful to the parliaments of France. Calas, Sirven, and La Barre ought to open the eyes of government, and induce it to reform ſuch criminal procedures. But abuſes are not corrected till they have arrived at the utmoſt exceſs. When theſe courts of juſtice, forgetful of conſequences, ſhall have condemned ſome duke and peer to the wheel, the powerful families will begin to exclaim; the courtiers will raiſe

their voices, and the calamities of the public will reach the ear of the monarch.

During the war, there was a contagious diſtemper at Breſlau, and a hundred and twenty perſons were buried per day. A counteſs at this period ſaid — "Thank God, the nobility are "ſpared; none but the vulgar die."——This is a picture of the thoughts of people in power, who imagine themſelves made up of atoms more precious than thoſe which compoſe the bodies of the common people whom they oppreſs. Such has been the caſe in all ages. The progreſs of great monarchies is uniform. Scarcely any who have not ſuffered are acquainted with, or deteſt, oppreſſion. The favourites of fortune, whom proſperity has benumbed, think that the miſeries of the people are exaggerated, and that injuſtice is only miſtake. Provided the grand ſpring of the machine does its duty, they trouble themſelves little with the reſt.

Since it is the fate of the world thus to be guided, my wiſh is that war may remove from your habitation, and that you may peacefully enjoy, in your retreat, and under the ſhade of the laurels of Apollo, that repoſe which is your due. I further wiſh, in this ſweet retreat, that you may feel as much pleaſure as your works have given to thoſe by whom they are read; and then

then nothing, leſs than being an inhabitant of the third heaven, could add to your felicity.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, March 3.

I PERFECTLY underſtand the adventure of the two dogs; and I underſtand it with the greater eaſe, becauſe I have received a trifling bite. My ſmall poſſeſſions reach almoſt to the gates of Geneva. All trade is interrupted by this ridiculous war, which ruins theſe parts, though it has not yet ſtained them with blood. Your dogs apply very pertinently to our heroes of France and Berne. Certain it is that, could brute animals reaſon with men, they would always be in the right; for they follow the indications of nature, which we have perverted.

With reſpect to the violin, I am afraid I am a little in the dark. Do you mean the king of Poland, who, unable by his own power to conquer his biſhops, ſecretly wiſhes the ſupport of your majeſty, and of Ruſſia, England, and Denmark; and that he is in reality only ſupported

by Ruſſia? Is it the empreſs of Ruſſia who ſingly, at preſent, bears the burden which ſhe wiſhed to divide with three powers?

I imagine I am near the truth, but I may be deceived; you know I am no great politician.

Your ally, the empreſs, has had the bounty to ſend me her juſtificatory memorial, which ſeems to me to be well drawn up. It is pleaſant enough, and has the appearance of contradiction, to behold indulgence and toleration ſupported ſword in hand. Yet intolerance is ſo odious that it deſerves the baſtinado. Since ſuperſtition has ſo long made war, why ſhould not war be made on ſuperſtition? Hercules went to engage with robbers, and Bellerophon with the Chimæra; nor ſhould I be vexed to ſee Hercules and Bellerophon free the earth from catholic robbers and chimæras.

Be it as it will, your two tales are very pleaſant. Your genius is ever the ſame, and your ſuperior reaſon is continually witty and gay. I hope your majeſty will deign to ſend me ſome new tale, on the folly of denying a prince the right of farming his ſubſtance, when the loweſt peaſant is allowed ſo to farm. I cannot think the denial juſt; it certainly merits a third tale.

I had the honour, in my laſt letter, to mention a perſon of the name of Morival, a cadet in one

one of your regiments at Weſel, who is a young man of good birth, and in favour of whoſe character ſufficient proofs are given. Is it to be conceived that he has been condemned to be burnt alive by the people of Picardy, for not having bowed to a proceſſion of capuchins, and for having ſung two ſongs? The Inquiſition itſelf is not guilty of horrors like theſe! If we caſt but a glance over the great ſtage of the world, we ſhall paſs the half of life in laughing, and the other half in ſhuddering!

Preſerve me, ſire, in your favour, during the ſhort time I have ſtill to vegetate, and to crawl, on this wretched and ridiculous heap of mud.

LETTER CCCXI.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 24, 1767.

I PITY you, when I hear your retreat is ſurrounded by men in arms. No place I find is private enough to be ſecure from tumult. Who would have imagined that a republic would be blockaded by neighbours to whom it owes no obedience? But I flatter myſelf the clouds will be diſperſed; and that the people of Geneva will become

become more pliable, or the French miniſtry leſs intemperate.

What I know, concerning the empreſs of Ruſſia, is, that ſhe has been ſolicited by the diſſidents to afford them aſſiſtance; and that ſhe has ſent orators on their march, well provided with cannon and bayonets, to convince the Poliſh biſhops of the *reality* of the *pretended* rights of the diſſidents.

It is not to be the fate of war to deſtroy the *infamous* ——, which muſt periſh by the arm of truth, and by the temptation of intereſt. If you wiſh me to explain myſelf, the following is my meaning.

I have remarked, as others alſo have done, that thoſe parts in which there are moſt monaſteries are the places where people moſt blindly addict themſelves to ſuperſtition. There is no doubt but that, ſhould theſe aſylums of fanaticiſm be once deſtroyed, the people would become ſomewhat indifferent, and lukewarm, concerning things which now attract their whole veneration. The deſtruction of theſe cloiſters is therefore what I alluded to; or at leaſt the commencement of the diminution of their number. The moment for this is come; becauſe the French and Auſtrian governments are in debt, and have exhauſted the reſources of induſ-

try to no effect, for the liquidation of theſe debts. The bait of rich abbeys, and well-rented convents, is tempting. By repreſenting to theſe powers the evil which cenobites are of, in retarding the population of their ſtates; by diſcovering how great is the abuſe of ſo great a number of the cucullatti, who ſwarm in their provinces; and by ſhewing, at the ſame time, the facility with which a part of the debts of the ſtate may be paid, by applying to this purpoſe the wealth of ſuch communities, to which there are no claiming heirs, I believe they might be brought determinately to begin the reformation. And it is to be preſumed that, after having taſted the ſweets reſulting from the ſecularization of ſome benefices, their avidity would ſoon ſwallow up the reſt.

Any government that ſhould reſolve on ſuch an operation, would be the friend of philoſophers, and the protector of all books which ſhould attack popular ſuperſtitions, and the falſe zeal of hypocrites, which would endeavour at oppoſition.

This ſmall project I ſubmit to the judgment of the patriarch of Ferney, and the father of the faithful; it is for him to improve upon and put it in execution.

The patriarch perhaps will aſk me, what is to

be done with biſhops? To this I ſhall anſwer, it is not yet time to moleſt them; it is requiſite to begin by rooting out thoſe who blow up the fire of fanaticiſm in the hearts of the people. As ſoon as the people ſhall cool, biſhops will become children; of whom monarchs may diſpoſe, in the ſucceſſion of time, in whatever manner they ſhall pleaſe.

The power of the eccleſiaſtics conſiſts only in opinion, for it is founded on the credulity of the multitude. Teach the truth, and the enchantment will be ended.

After much enquiry, I have diſcovered the unfortunate companion of La Barre, who is an enſign at Weſel, to which place I have written for him.

I am informed from Paris that they are preparing to repreſent your tragedy, *Les Scythes* *, in a ſplendid manner. You are not ſatisfied with enlightening your country; you wiſh alſo to contribute to its pleaſures. May you long continue ſo to contribute; and may you enjoy, in your calm retreat, thoſe delights you have beſtowed upon your contemporaries, and which will be continued to future races, as long as men ſhall remain who love letters, and ſenſible

* The Scythians.

hearts ſhall exiſt that taſte the tranſport of tears! *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, April 5, 1767.

I DO not know when the dogs that are fighting for a bone, and, as your majeſty has well ſaid, are ſuffering under the cudgel, will come to aſk a kennel in your kingdom *. All theſe little dogs, accuſtomed to yelp on their cuſhions, daily become more irreſolute. Two families I imagine will immediately depart; but I can ſay nothing concerning the others, all communication being interdicted by a line of troops, of the conqueſts of which the earth already reſounds. The heroes have conquered more than twelve pints of milk, and above four pair of pigeons! Should they go on thus, the campaign will be extremely glorious. It is not however

* M. de Voltaire was at this time deſirous that Weſel might ſerve as an aſylum to the proſcribed citizens of Geneva. He had ſome time before attempted to ſettle a colony of French philoſophers there.

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the diſaſters of war which lead me to regret the time I formerly paſſed with your majeſty.

I never ſhall conſole myſelf for the misfortune which obliges me to end my life far from you. I am as happy as a man in my ſituation can be; but I am far diſtant from the only true philoſophic prince. I well know there are many monarchs who think like you. But where is one to be found, who could have written the Preface to the Hiſtory of the Church? Where is one whoſe mind is ſtrong enough, and whoſe view of ſociety is ſufficiently enlarged, to dare firſt to ſee, and afterward to affirm, kings may reign without the cowardly aid of a ſect? Where is the prince ſufficiently well informed to know that, during the ſpace of eighteen hundred years, the Chriſtian ſect has never effected any thing but evil?

You have ſeen many books on the ſubject, the arguments of which are unanſwerable. Perhaps they are rather too long; perhaps they ſometimes repeat the ſame things, after each other: but I do not condemn ſuch repetitions; they are ſtrokes with the hammer, which drive the nail deeper into the head of fanaticiſm. But it ſeems to me that an excellent collection of all theſe books might be made, after re-

trenching ſome ſuperfluous things, and bringing the proofs into a leſs compaſs.

I long have flattered myſelf that a ſmall colony of the learned and the wiſe might repair to your ſtates, and there dedicate themſelves to the improvement of the human race. But a thouſand obſtacles are daily accumulating, that are contrary to this plan.

Were I not ſo old, and had I good health, I ſhould without regret forſake the houſe I have built, and the trees I have planted, to come and end my life in the country of Cleves, in company with two or three philoſophers; and devote my laſt days, under your protection, to the printing of ſome uſeful books. But cannot you, ſire, without ſeeming to interfere, encourage ſome bookſeller in Berlin to reprint theſe books, and to vend them through Europe, at a price ſo low as to render them eaſy of purchaſe? This would be an amuſement to your majeſty; and all thoſe who ſhould labour, at the good work, would find the recompence rather in this world than in the next.

As I was continuing, in thought, to enforce my requeſt to your majeſty, I received the letter of the 24th of March, with which you have honoured me. Well may you ſay that the *infamous* —— will never be deſtroyed by war; for

for war implies that men ſhould fight for ſome new ſuperſtition, which would not gain proſelytes unleſs it ſhould be more abominable than the old. Arms may dethrone a pope, or diſpoſſeſs an eccleſiaſtic elector, but not wreſt the ſceptre from the hand of impoſture.

I cannot conceive how it happened that you did not acquire ſome good biſhopric, to repay the expences of war, by the laſt treaty. I am, however, well convinced you will never root out the ſuperſtition of the Chriſtian worſhip with any thing but the arms of reaſon.

Your idea, of beginning the attack on the monks, is that of a great captain. Let friars be but once aboliſhed, and error will be expoſed to univerſal contempt. Much is written in France on that ſubject; it is the general topic of converſation. The Benedictines themſelves have been ſo much aſhamed of wearing the garment of opprobrium, that they have preſented a requeſt to the king of France, to be ſecularized. But this great affair has been ſuppoſed not ſufficiently ripe; men are not yet bold enough in France, and the bigots ſtill preſerve influence.

I ſend you a pamphlet which has fallen into my hands; it is not voluminous, but it ſays much. The monſter muſt be attacked, ears and throat.

I have a young man with me, named M. de la Harpe, who cultivates literature with ſucceſs. He has written an Epiſtle from a Monk to the Founder of La Trappe, which to me appears excellent. I ſhall do myſelf the honour to ſend it to your majeſty by the firſt conveyance. I do not think it will be condemned to be broken on the wheel, and burnt by a ſlow fire, like the unfortunate officer who is at Weſel, and whom I know to be a very worthy man. I return your majeſty thanks, in the name of reaſon and common decency, for the protection which you grant to this victim of the fanaticiſm of our Druids.

Les Scythes is a work of much mediocrity; it rather depicts the manners of the petty Swiſs cantons, and a French marquis, than the Scythians, and a Perſian prince. Thiriot will have the honour to ſend this rhapſody to your majeſty, from Paris.

I ſhall always feel unhappy to die, and not to die in your kingdom. May your majeſty deign to preſerve ſome remembrance of me, for my conſolation!

LETTER CCCXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

May 2, 1767.

PERMIT me to remark to your majeſty that you reſemble one of the characters of La Fontaine—

Droit au ſolide allait Bartholomée *.

This immediately coming to the point, aſtoniſhingly accompanies true glory. You render a monarchy flouriſhing and potent, which under the king your grandfather was but the kingdom of vanity: you have diſcerned truth of every kind; for which reaſon you are in every kind ſingular, and yourſelf.

It is my duty to inform your majeſty that a young man of twenty-five, a very good and well informed officer, who has been in the ſervice ever ſince the age of twelve, and who is determined hereafter to ſerve none but you, has left Paris without ſaying a word to any one, and is coming to demand your permiſſion to have his head broken under your orders. He is of a very ancient family; a real marquis, and not

* Bartholomew immediately came to the point.

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one of thoſe chance marquiſes who take up their titles in an inn, and oblige the poſtilions, whom they do not pay, to call them My Lord. He is the marquis de St. Antoine, the nephew of a lieutenant-general, who is one of our moſt amiable academicians, and who wrote very good poetry when he was near a hundred; ſuch as you, according to my hope and belief, will write at that age.

I return your majeſty thanks for having deigned to ſend me, by M. de Catt, the anſwer you have made to Marmontel concerning his Poetics. How many leſſons do you afford us! Your worthy Swiſs has written me a charming letter. He eſteems himſelf happy to have been a ſpectator of the grand ſcenes in which your majeſty has acted ſo ſuperior a part; and I eſteem him ſtill more happy to be daily at the feet of my hero, who is occupied in the felicity of his people.

The old valetudinarian throws himſelf at your feet, with attachment, admiration, reſpect, and remorſe.

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LETTER CCCXIV.

From the King.

Potſdam, May 5, 1767.

I IMAGINED, during the troubles which laid Europe waſte, that the territories of Ferney, and the city of Geneva, were the ark in which ſome of the juſt were preſerved from the public calamities. But it muſt be owned there is no place into which the reſtleſſneſs of men, and the fatal chain of cauſes, may not introduce ſuch ſcourges. I pity the citizens of Calviniſtic Rome, reduced thus to the hard neceſſity of forſaking their country, or of renouncing the privileges of their freedom. They are contending with the mighty, and the French treat them with all rigour. Lentulus, who has paid a viſit to his country, propoſed to have viſited you likewiſe, had he not been prevented by the impenetrable line which they had drawn with their troops. Thus are all projects ruined by the laws of viciſſitude. The city of Jeruſalem, built by the people of God, is in the poſſeſſion of the Turks. The Capitol, that aſylum of nations, that auguſt place in which the ſenate that once reigned over the world aſſembled, is

now

now inhabited by recollet friars. And Ferney, the ſweet and agreeable retreat of philoſophy, is become the head quarters of the French troops. But you will ſoften the hearts of theſe ferocious warriors; like as your predeceſſor, Orpheus, tamed lions and tigers.

It is a pity that you ſhould be ſubject, like other beings, to the infirmities of age; from theſe bodies inhabited by ſouls ſo diſtinguiſhed as yours ought to be exempt. The arts and the people of our little country will eternally regret your loſs; for this will be one of the loſſes that are not eaſily repaired. Your memory will never periſh here.

You may employ our printers according to your wiſh; they enjoy perfect liberty; and, as they have connections with the bookſellers of Holland, France, and Germany, I have no doubt but they have the means of conveying books into what countries they pleaſe.

We have gained a new advantage in Spain; the Jeſuits are expelled the kingdom; and the courts of Verſailles, Vienna, and Madrid have moreover demanded from the Pope the ſuppreſſion of a conſiderable number of monaſteries. The holy father, it is ſaid, will be obliged to give his conſent; though with an angry heart. Ah cruel revolution! What may not be expect-

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ed from the next century? The axe is laid to the root of the tree. Philoſophers, on one part, cry aloud againſt the abſurdities of revered ſuperſtition; on the other, abuſe and diſſipation oblige princes to ſeize on the wealth of the recluſe, who were the props and the trumpeters of fanaticiſm. Her edifice, ſapped to the foundation, will ſoon fall; and it will be written, in the annals of nations, that Voltaire was the promoter of the revolution which took place, during the nineteenth century, in the human mind.

Who would have ſaid, in the twelfth century, that the light of the world was to iſſue from a ſmall town in Swiſſerland, named Ferney? All great men communicate their celebrity to the places they inhabit, and to the times in which they flouriſhed.

I am informed from Paris that *Les Scythes* will be ſent me, and am certain I ſhall find the piece intereſting and pathetic. Oh happy gifts—gifts that impart a charm to all your tragedies!

I have ſeen tragedies, and panegyrics, written by the young poet whom you mention, who verſifies well, and is not without fire. I thank you for his Epiſtle which you mean to ſend me.

I have received the Beliſarius of Marmontel. The Sorbonne muſt have been in a very ill humour,

mour, to condemn the deſire which the author had to prove the ſalvation of Cicero, and Marcus Aurelius. I rather ſuſpect government imagined it perceived ſome alluſions between the reign of Juſtinian and that of Louis XV; and that, to torment the author, it has let looſe the Sorbonne againſt him, like a dog accuſtomed to bark whenever his maſter bids.

Take care of your health, and be ſparing of your old age, in your quarters general of Ferney. Recollect that Archimedes, while the city which he defended was aſſaulted, was reſolving a problem, in great tranquillity; and be perſuaded that king Hieron was leſs intereſted in the preſervation of his mathematician, than I am in that of the great man who is ſurrounded by the line of French forces.[t]

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXV.

From the King.

Potſdam, July 31, 1767.

I BELIEVED, with the public, you had changed your abode. Letters from Paris affirmed that you had departed to ſettle at Lyons; and

and I attributed your long ſilence to the hurry of removal: the cauſe you allege is very vexatious.

The poem on the people of Geneva was ſent me by Thiriot. I have received but two cantos. You will do me a pleaſure by ſending me the whole work. While reading it, I ſhall admire that fire of imagination, which neither the cold of Swiſſerland, nor the icy hand of age, has been able to extinguiſh; and, as I perceive the work is written with more pleaſantry than ardour, I imagine you to be more alive than ever. In fine, you have eſcaped this new danger, and will ſoon, no doubt, regale us with ſome poem on Styx, Charon, Cerberus, and all the objects of which you have had ſo near a view. You ought to ſend us a relation of your voyage. You will find yourſelf very much at your eaſe, while writing it, if you do but follow the example of other travellers, who are under no conſtraint while they relate things which they never beheld, in real countries. In your fictitious regions, you will be aided by mythology, divinity, and metaphyſics. How noble a flight for the imagination! But let us return to the world exiſting.

Men grow prodigiouſly old here, my dear Voltaire. Oh how all is changed, ſince the

times

times you recollect! My ſtomach is now ſcarcely capable of digeſtion, and obliges me to give up ſuppers. In the evening, I either read or converſe. My hairs are white, my teeth take their leave of me, and my legs are rendered uſeleſs by the gout. I ſtill vegetate, but well perceive that time ſtamps a very ſenſible difference between the age of forty and that of fifty-ſix. Add to which, I have been overburthened with affairs ever ſince the peace: ſo that I have nothing but a little good ſenſe remaining, with a reviving paſſion for the ſciences and the fine arts. Theſe are my conſolation, and my joy. Your mind is more youthful than mine. You have, no doubt, drunken at the fountain of *Jouvence* *, where you have found ſome ſecret, unknown to the great men your predeceſſors.

You are about to re-examine your Age of Louis XIV. But do you not think it dangerous to write truths which refer to the preſent times? Truth is like the ark of the Lord, it muſt not be touched. This reminds me that I have a doubt to propoſe to you, which I beg you to remove. The age of Auguſtus, and the age of Louis XIV. are common expreſſions. But

* The fountain of *Jouvence* is proverbial in the French language, and ſignifies the reſtoration of youth. *Jouvence* appears to be derived from the *Juturna* of ancient fable. T.

to what period ought this term *age* to extend? How long before the birth of the perſon from whom it takes its name; and how long after his death? Your anſwer will decide a trifling literary diſpute, which has ariſen here on this ſubject.

I envy Lentulus the pleaſure he has enjoyed, in ſeeing you; and, as you mention him to me, I ſuppoſe he has been at Ferney. He has ſeen you *facie ad faciem*, as the great Condé dying hoped to ſee God. For my own part, I can ſee nothing but my garden.

We have celebrated marriages, and afterward betrothings of marriage. I am ſettling my family; for I have more nephews and nieces than you have. We all lead a peaceful and philoſophic life.

There is as little talk of the diſſidents, and of what their deciſions will be, as of the men of Geneva, and the heroes by whom they are ſurrounded. I have heard, with pleaſure, that they are left in tranquillity. Should they be wiſe, they will quickly end their political diſputes, and will not hereafter call in neighbours more powerful than themſelves, to act as umpires.

Live, for the honour of letters. May your body grow young like your mind; and, though

not able to liſten to you, may I read your thoughts, admire you, and offer up prayers for the patriarch of Ferney!

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, November, 1769.

A BOHEMIAN, of much wit and philoſophy, whoſe name is Grim, has informed me that you have initiated the Emperor into our holy myſteries; and has added, you were not very well pleaſed that I ſhould have paſſed near two years without writing to you.

I moſt humbly thank your majeſty for this trifling reproach. I confeſs I was ſo vexed, and ſo aſhamed, at the little ſucceſs of the tranſmigration to Cleves, that, ſince that time, I have not ventured to preſent any of my ideas to your majeſty. When I recollect that a madman and an idiot, like St. Ignatius, found a dozen proſelytes for his followers, and that I could not meet with three philoſophers, I have been tempted to believe reaſon is of no worth. Beſide, ſay what you pleaſe, I am become very old; and, in deſpite

ſpite of all my coquetry with the empreſs of Ruſſia, the fact is, I have long been dying, and am dying at this moment.

But I revive, and with me revive all my former ſentiments toward your majeſty, as well as all my philoſophy, by which I am now enabled to write to you, relative to a trifling Engliſh piece of extravagance, which reſpects your perſon. You will eaſily imagine there is no mirth in this act of Engliſh lunacy. There are many ſages in England, but the number of gloomy enthuſiaſts is no leſs. One of theſe ſpleen-poſſeſſed people, whoſe intentions may be good, has thought proper to print in the court gazette, called the Whitehall Evening Poſt, of the 7th of October, a pretended letter from me to your majeſty, in which I exhort you not to corrupt the nation you govern. The following are his words, faithfully tranſlated: "Quelle "pitié, ſi l'étendue de vos connaiſſances, vos "talens, et vos vertus, ne vous ſervaient qu'à "pervertir ces dons du ciel pour faire la miſère "et la déſolation du genre humain! Vous "n'avez rien à déſirer, ſire, dans ce monde, "que l'auguſte titre d'un héros Chrétien *."

I flatter

* I have inſerted the whole letter, from the Whitehall Evening Poſt, as no incurious ſpecimen of the artifices uſed

I flatter myſelf this fanatic will ſoon print a letter from me to the Grand Turk, Muſtapha, in

by the Religioniſts, in France, to ſpread the opinion that M. de Voltaire was actually their convert: I ſay in France, for the letter contains ſufficient internal evidence that it was written in French; and not, as M. de Voltaire ſuppoſes, by an Engliſhman. The paſſage quoted in the text is at the latter part of the following letter, and is put between inverted commas. T.

A Letter from M. DE VOLTAIRE *to the* KING OF PRUSSIA.

SIRE,

IF the ſevere diſgrace which interrupted all correſpondence with your majeſty be ſtill recent in my memory, the confidence with which you formerly honoured me, and the favours you heaped upon me, have made a far deeper impreſſion upon my heart. Gratitude ſhould ſtifle all reſentment in a generous mind. Genius, talents, and the moſt ſublime virtues, are ever taxed by humanity with ſome imperfections.

In the impetuous whirlwind of youth, when the paſſions ferment with almoſt irreſiſtible violence, every thing is ſacrificed to the pleaſure of the ſenſes. A variety of ſeducing objects, that aſſail us, eclipſe the feeble rays of that bud of reaſon which does not regain its empire till age and reflection have conquered our moſt prevailing deſires. The maſk then drops, the illuſion ceaſes, and all thoſe brilliant chimeras which had faſcinated our bewildered imagination, are diſſipated like an infectious vapour, which leaves nothing behind but diſguſt, averſion, and the keeneſt repentance.

Slaves to opinion, and ſeduced by the ambition of paſſing for

in which I ſhall exhort his highneſs to be a Mahometan hero. But, as there is no heroic blood

for men of faſhion, wits, and geniuſes (above vulgar prejudice) we deſpiſe, as popular errors, the moſt important, the moſt ſacred truths; and our eyes only begin to open when old age, anticipated by all the refinements of voluptuouſneſs, leaves us no other ſenſations but thoſe of regret and pain—the fatal conſequences of a prophane diſſolute life! It is in this interval, which ſucceeds the tranquillity of the paſſions, and is the prelude to the horrors of the grave, that the moſt bitter reflections, and the moſt cruel remorſe of a conſcience juſtly alarmed, poiſon the laſt period of our exiſtence; happy if our enfeebled organs do not reduce our faculties to mere animal inſtinct, and leave us any veſtiges of a thinking being! Perhaps a puerile imbecillity concludes our exceſſes, and ſacrilegious purſuits. What a dreadful ſtate is a tranſition, without recollection of libertiniſm and impiety, to the ſupreme tribunal of the incorruptible judge of the whole univerſe!

The infallibility which every man of the leaſt eminence in the republic of letters ſeems to arrogate to himſelf, in the moſt ſingular opinions; the pre-eminence which he claims over his antagoniſts; the ſhame of retracting favourite errors, ſupported by fallacious ſophiſms, and publicly promulgated; the fear of loſing a reputation gained by illuſive paradoxes, and an enchanting ſtyle; a puſillanimous deference for the judgment of ſome writers, fearful of their enmity and cenſure, are commonly the motives that induce him to perſevere, to the end, in the avowal of maxims the moſt pernicious to ſociety, againſt ſelf-conviction.

Rank, titles, and fame, give credit to the moſt odious principles and the moſt perverſe notions. The multitude, who re-

blood in the veins of Muſtapha, and as my true heroine, the empreſs of Ruſſia, has taken good

ceive no impreſſion but from the reputation of thoſe who govern and inſtruct them, adopt, without daring to reflect upon or examine, the moſt extravagant dogmas of theſe preceptors to human nature; and are leſs influenced by their own judgment, than the idea they have framed of the certainty of theſe pedants' deciſions. Hence ariſes that contagious depravity, which honour, a ſentiment unknown to the multitude, cannot ſtop, without the auxiliary aid of a ſublime morality, and a religion calculated for the mutual good of ſovereigns and nations.

Powerful formidable monarchs, who command millions of men and invincible legions! that religion which you deſpiſe, and whoſe moſt ſacred precepts you turn into ridicule, is, nevertheleſs, the ſtrongeſt buttreſs to your thrones, and the moſt reſpectable tie of ſociety; the moſt certain guarantee of your authority, and the ſubordination of the people:—it is religion that muſt be reſponſible for their fidelity and ſervice; which compels them to laviſh their blood and fortunes for your defence and preſervation; by this, good order, peace, and harmony are ſupported among your ſubjects, as well as that ſpirit of concord and univerſal benevolence which unites them like one great family. In fine, it is religion that ſtops the regicide hand of a malecontent, proſcribed and diſgraced, and prevents his avenging your violence and injuſtice. Were there no religion, each one would give a looſe to his paſſions; each one would exert his ſtrength to oppreſs the weak, his cunning to deceive the ſimple, his eloquence to ſeduce the credulous, his credit to deſtroy the commerce, his power to promulgate terror, horror, bloodſhed, carnage—ſhocking diſorders in themſelves, but neceſſary upon the principle of incredulity.

good care on this ſubject, I do not think I ſhall undertake any ſuch Turkiſh converſion. I ſhall be

dulity. Terreſtrial honour is but a ſuperficial virtue; the art of diſguiſing one's ſelf to the eyes of men; to deceive them with politeneſs; rather to appearance virtuous than really to be ſo.

Know your intereſts better: inſtead of forcing all the trenches that God has raiſed againſt the wickedneſs of human nature; encouraging your ſubjects to be obſtinately incredulous, in order to be paſſable villains; to give the lye to heaven, earth, the ſea, nature, and all the elements; ſupport by your edicts, and your example, religion, as a revelation derived from heaven, and founded upon a thouſand proofs; anticipate the progreſs of evil; and form youth ſo as to be able to withſtand the impreſſion of incredulity and libertiniſm.

How corrupt muſt we be to hate a religion without which we cannot avoid being miſerable! Do not the happieſt of men ſtand in need of its aſſiſtance? How much uneaſineſs aſſails the throne! How many diſgraces attend a court! How various the mortifications in the army! What innumerable accidents wait on trade! How uncertain is ſcience! What bitters are blended with the greateſt pleaſures! To how many attacks are the beſt reputations ſubject! What inconſtancy is there in riches! What infidelity in friendſhip! What viciſſitudes in fortune! Miſerable man, who will ſupport thee againſt ſo many evils? What a ſhocking conſolation we receive from the paſſions, in theſe dreadful periods of our life! How incapable is even philoſophy to relieve a wretched mortal in the bed of infirmity, racked with the gout, and tortured with the ſtone! Oh! How neceſſary is religion, particularly at that fatal criſis which terminates all the ſteps of our life!

be true to the princes and princeſſes of the North, who to me appear to be more enlightened than the whole ſeraglio of Conſtantinople.

The

What can ſupport a man tilting againſt death, that grim king of terrors, if it be not religion? A man who ſees his greatneſs humbled, his treaſures ſeized upon, his deareſt ties deſtroyed, his ſenſes benumbed, his grave dug, the world vaniſhing from his ſight, and his ſoul divided between the fate of annihilation and the horrid fear of being delivered up to an avenging God!

The deiſt, in admitting the exiſtence of a Supreme Being, creator of the univerſe, maintains that this firſt Being is too great, and too high, to caſt his eyes down upon the earth, and attend to the works of a creature as mean and indigent as man; but is this the idea we ſhould entertain of the Deity? The direction of the courſe of the ſun, the government of the world, the formation of this multitude of beings which are created in nature, the conduct of the univerſe, cannot exhauſt this Intelligence who is the object of our devotion. Whilſt his thoughts, in their vaſt extent, embrace all poſſible exiſting creatures, he has preſent before his eyes each individual, as if he were occupied with one ſole object.

The diſpenſer of ſceptres and crowns has placed you, ſire, at the head of a nation powerful and warlike, which you have formed by your inſtruction and your example. Your knowledge and your writings have ſecured you the pre-eminence in the empire of letters. The wiſdom of your inſtitutions and your foundations, your admirable ſagacity in the art of governing, and the internal police of your ſtates, have juſtly conferred upon you the titles of Politician and Legiſlator. Your victories, your triumphs, and your conqueſts, have made you the arbiter of the fate of Europe. "What a pity would

"it

The only anſwer I have returned to the author who has imputed to me this excellent letter, written to your majeſty, was the following lines—"In the Whitehall Evening Poſt, of "the 7th of October 1769, No. 3668, I have "ſeen a pretended letter from me to his ma"jeſty the king of Pruſſia; which letter, though "a very ſtupid one, I nevertheleſs have not "written.

"Given at Ferney,
"October 29th, 1769. "VOLTAIRE."

There are, ſire, in all countries, people equally abſurd and malignant, who pretend to believe no man is poſſeſſed of any religion, who is not of their ſect. Such ſuperſtitious knaves reſemble

"it be if ſuch extenſive knowledge, ſuch talents and virtues, "ſhould obtain temporary honour and diſtinctions; if your "majeſty ſhould pervert thoſe gifts of heaven for the miſery "and deſolation of mankind! You have nothing left to de"ſire in this world, ſire, but the auguſt title of Chriſtian "Hero."—My wiſhes for your majeſty have a more extenſive object than tranſitory happineſs. You may, ſire, give the world the magnanimous example of the ſublime virtues of Chriſtianity; and publicly diſavow, as I do at preſent, thoſe erroneous principles, and impious opinions, which will otherwiſe be tranſmitted with your writings to poſterity.

I have the honour to be,
with the moſt profound veneration, ſire,
Your majeſty's moſt humble and moſt obedient ſervant,
AROUET DE VOLTAIRE.

reſemble the character of *Philaminte*, in the *Femmes Savantes* * of Moliere. They ſay,

Nul ne doit plaire à Dieu que nous et nos amis †.

I have ſomewhere ſaid that *La Motte le Vayer*, preceptor to the brother of Louis XIV. on a certain occaſion returned the following anſwer to one of theſe blockheads—"My friend, "I have ſo much religion that I am not of thy "religion."

Such wretched people are ignorant that true piety, true wiſdom, and true worſhip, conſiſt in adoring God as the common father of all men, without diſtinction, and as a beneficent being.

They know not that religion conſiſts neither in the reveries of the good quakers, in thoſe of the good anabaptiſts, nor the pietiſts; in impanation and invination; nor in a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loretto, Our Lady of the Snows, or Our Lady of the Seven Griefs; but in the knowledge of the Supreme Being, who fills all nature, and in virtue.

I cannot perceive any well-enlightened piety in the refuſal to the Poliſh diſſidents of thoſe rights which they brought into the world with them; and which refuſal has called in the jani-

* The Learned Women.

† None but us and our friends can be pleaſing to God.

zaries

zaries of our holy father, the Turk, to the aid of the good Roman Catholics of Sarmatia. The Holy Ghoſt will ſcarcely take the direction of this buſineſs to himſelf; at leaſt, not unleſs it be the ſame Holy Ghoſt that guided the hand of the reverend father Malagrida, that of the reverend father Guignard, or that of the reverend father James Clement *.

I enquire not into the politics which have always ſupported the cauſe of God, from the time of the great Conſtantine, who was the aſſaſſin of his whole family, to the murder of Charles I. when the executioner held the axe in one hand, and the goſpel in the other. I do not trouble myſelf with politics. I have continually been ſatisfied with making ſuch trifling efforts as I was able, that I might render men leſs fooliſh, and better. Full of this idea,

* The following words were found in the hand-writing of father Guignard: "Neither Henry III. Henry IV. queen "Elizabeth, the king of Sweden, nor the elector of Saxony, "are truly ſovereigns. Henry III. is a Sardanapalus; the "man of Bearn (Henry IV.) a fox; Elizabeth, a wolf; the "king of Sweden, a griffin; and the elector of Saxony, a hog. "James Clement has done an heroic act, *inſpired by the Holy* "*Ghoſt*. If war can, let war be made on the man of Bearn; "if it cannot, let him die."—Guignard, at his execution, refuſed to confeſs himſelf guilty of any act of treaſon toward the king. T.

without conſulting the intereſts of certain monarchs, which intereſts are to me wholly unknown, I am contented with paſſionately wiſhing the barbarous Turks might inceſſantly be expelled the country of Xenophon, of Socrates, of Plato, of Sophocles, and of Euripides. Were this deſired, it would ſoon be effected; but formerly ſeven cruſades were undertaken by ſuperſtition, though a cruſade of honour will never take place. The whole burthen is left for Catherine to bear.

I have been in bed for the ſpace of a year. Would my bed were at Cleves!

I hear your majeſty, who is not made for bed, is in better health than ever; that you grow fat, and that you are very freſh-coloured. May the great Being, who fills the univerſe, preſerve you; and may you ever remain the protector of thinking people, and the ſcourge of the ridiculous.

Accept the profound reſpect of your old ſervant; who, let what will be ſaid to the contrary, has never changed his opinions.

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LETTER CCCXVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, November 25, 1769.

YOU are too modeſt, if you can ſuppoſe a ſilence like that which you have kept, during two years, may be ſupported with patience. The thing cannot be. All men who love literature ought to intereſt themſelves in your preſervation, and to be happy to hear from you. It is a matter of indifference to me whether the Swiſs ſettle in Cleves, or remain at Geneva; but I am very deſirous to know what is the progreſs of reaſon; and what the employment of our modern Prometheus, who bears the celeſtial flambeau, to enlighten the blind, and to free them from their prejudices and their errors.

I am glad Engliſh ſtupidity has brought you to life: I love madmen who can act ſuch miracles. I do not the leſs believe the Engliſh author to be an ancient Pict, unacquainted with Europe. He muſt have very newly come into the world, to metamorphoſe you into a father of the church, who, in pity to my ſoul, labours for my converſion. It were to be wiſhed your

French biſhops had an equally good opinion of your orthodoxy; for, had they ſo, you would live in greater tranquillity.

With reſpect to the Great Turk, he is ſuppoſed to be moſt orthodox, both at Rome and at Verſailles. He fights, as theſe gentlemen pretend, for the Catholic, Apoſtolic, and Roman faith: the creſcent defends the croſs; and ſupports the biſhops, and the confederates of Poland, againſt the accurſed heretics, both Greeks and diſſidents; and fights to the great glory of the Moſt Holy Father!

Had I not read the hiſtory of the cruſades in your works, I ſhould perhaps have indulged myſelf in the phrenzy of wiſhing to conquer Paleſtine, to deliver Sion, and to pluck palm branches in Idumea: but the follies committed by ſo many kings, and paladins, who have made war in theſe diſtant lands, have prevented me from imitating them; well aſſured that the empreſs of Ruſſia will render a good account of her own enterprizes. I am ſatisfied with exhorting the confederated gentlemen to union and peace; and with pointing out to them the difference between perſecuting them for their religion, and requiring them not to perſecute others. In fine, I wiſh Europe were at peace, and that the whole world were contented.

I believe

I believe I have inherited theſe ſentiments from the late abbé de Saint Pierre; and it may happen to me, as it did to him, to be the only man of my own ſect.

To paſs to a more cheerful ſubject, I ſend you a prologue, which I haſtily wrote to regale the electreſs of Saxony, who has paid me a viſit. She is a princeſs of great merit, and deſerved to have her virtues ſung by a better poet.

You perceive I ſtill perſiſt in my former foibles. I paſſionately love the belles lettres, for they alone are the delight of our leiſure, and only can inſpire true delight. I ſhould be as much in love with philoſophy, could our feeble reaſon there diſcover thoſe truths that are concealed from our ſight, and of which our vain curioſity is in ſuch eager ſearch. But the acquirement of knowledge is the beginning of doubt. I therefore quit this ſea, ſo abundant in the rocks of abſurdity; well perſuaded that, all the abſtract ſubjects of our ſpeculation being beyond our reach, could we obtain the knowledge of them, that knowledge would be entirely uſeleſs.

Thinking thus, I paſs my old age in repoſe. I endeavour to procure all the pamphlets of the nephew of the abbé Bazin; for his are the only works fit to be read.

To

To him I wiſh long life, health, and content; and, let him ſay what he will, I love him ever.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

MY DEAR LORRAIN *, December, 1769.

I KNOW not what your name or titles may be at preſent; but, after a lapſe of eighteen years, I have recognized your hand-writing. I perceive you work under the direction of a great maſter. I find you are one of the academicians of Berlin; conſequently you are its ornament, and its director. You appear to me to be a great philoſopher, in the land of reviews, cannon, and bayonets. How have you been able to connect things ſo oppoſite? There is no court in Europe in which theſe enemies are thus aſſociated. Perhaps you will tell me that Marcus Aurelius, and Julian, had diſco-

* This letter is in anſwer to a manuſcript work, which M. de Voltaire had received from the king of Pruſſia, on the principles of morality. He addreſſes himſelf to the tranſcriber of the work, whoſe hand-writing he ſuppoſes he recollects.

vered

vered this ſecret, which till our times had again been loſt; and that you live with a maſter by whom it has once more been revived. Very true, my dear Lorrain; but it is not even in your maſter's power to beſtow genius.

Of genius you muſt have had much; ſince you have diſcovered in your work the true manner to be virtuous, without being either fool or enthuſiaſt.

You are in the right; you have reached the goal. Self-love, well directed, renders men of ſenſe truly virtuous. Nothing, therefore, is requiſite but good ſenſe; and every man, no doubt, has enough to underſtand you, ſince your work is adapted, as all good works are, to the capacities of all people.

Yes, ſelf-love is the wind which ſwells the ſails, and impels the ſhip toward the harbour. When the wind is too violent, the veſſel founders. When ſelf-love is diſorderly, it becomes madneſs; but madneſs has no alliance with good ſenſe. Thus do we diſcover reaſon married to ſelf-love; and their offspring are virtue and happineſs. True it is, reaſon has made many miſcarriages, before ſhe brought theſe two fine boys into the world; and it is even affirmed their conſtitutions are not yet robuſt, but that they have ſtill ſome trifling maladies: of

theſe, however, they will be cured by regimen.

How do I admire you, my dear Lorrain, when I read the following words!——"What "can be more beautiful, or more admirable, "than to draw, from a principle which may "even lead to vice, the ſource of good, and "public felicity!"

It is affirmed you have done the Gauls the honour to write poetry in their language. I wiſh I could ſee ſome of your performances! Pray inform me how you have been able to become a poet, a philoſopher, an orator, a hiſtorian, and a muſician. Some ſay there is a Genius in your country, which appears every Thurſday at Berlin; and that, as ſoon as he enters a certain hall, a moſt excellent ſymphony is heard, the fineſt airs of which are of his compoſition. During the remainder of the week, he retires to a palace built by a necromancer, from which he ſheds his influence over the earth. I believe I had a glimpſe of him twenty years ago. He ſeemed to me to have wings, for he paſſed in the twinkling of an eye from one empire to another. I even imagine I recollect that he ſtruck me to the ground by a waft with his wing.

Should you meet with him under a laurel-

tree, or on a bed of roſes, for thoſe are his haunts; place me at his feet; that is, ſuppoſing him to have feet, for he cannot be formed like men. Tell him I never cheriſh rancour againſt the genii. Aſſure him my greateſt regret, at the hour of death, will be that of not having lived under the ſhadow of his wings. And add that I venture to love his univerſality, with the moſt reſpectful admiration.

LETTER CCCXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

Ferney, December 9, 1769.

WHEN fair Thaleſtris, beauteous northern maid!
A viſit to Arbella's victor paid,
For her the Pleaſures he collected all,
And dance and ſong reſounded in the hall:
For her he wrote; for her his lyre he ſtrung;
For her divinely play'd, while ſhe divinely ſung.
'Twas heav'n to hear! And Jove creates, 'tis ſaid,
Only for ſuch a hero ſuch a maid!

Pauſanias, in his Pruſiacs, affirms that Alexander carried his love for the fine arts ſo far as to write in verſe, in the language of the Gauls; and adds that he continually infuſed an uncom-

mon ſpirit into his poetry, with harmony, truth of conception, and a great knowledge of mankind; and that he wrote his verſes with incredible facility. He adds that thoſe which he compoſed for *Thaleſtris* were full of grace and harmony.

He adds that his talents greatly aſtoniſhed the Macedonians, and the people of Thrace, who were but little learned in Greek poetry: and that they were taught by other nations how great was the wit of their maſter; for, as to themſelves, they knew him only to be a brave warrior, and one who could govern as well as fight.

About this time, ſays Plutarch, lived an old Gaul, who had retired toward the mountains of Caucaſus. He was a man who had formerly lived at the court of Alexander, and who ſtill was as happy as he could be ſuppoſed to be, at ſuch a diſtance from the camp of the conqueror of Arbella, and of *Baſroc* *. This old dotard often ſaid he was much afflicted that it would be his lot to die, without having once again paid his court to the hero of Macedonia.

Sire, I have no doubt but, among the learned men of your court, there are ſome who have read Plutarch, and Xenophon, in the library of your new palace; and they will ſhew you theſe

* This I imagine to be an anagram, for Roſbach. T.

Greek

Greek paſſages which I have the honour to cite, and which your majeſty will find to be literally true.

I would give the whole mountain of Caucaſus, could I but ſee this old Gaul, for the ſpace of two days only, at the court of Alexander.

LETTER CCCXX.

From the King.

January 4, 1770.

THE old mountain Gaul, our great prophet of truth,
His Pegaſus ſpurs with the ſpeed of his youth.
Pauſanias he quotes; but I'd much rather ſeek
To banquet and talk with the Gaul than the Greek.

The old Gaul is very learned; it appears, however, that he treats the poor Thracian, whom he *Alexanderizes*, with ſome little irony. This poor Thracian is a very common man, who never was poſſeſſed of the great talents of the victor of the Granicus, nor of his vices. He has written poetry in the Gallic tongue, becauſe he could not do otherwiſe; and, to his misfortune, becauſe he was the only perſon in his country who was infected with the diſeaſe of rhyming. His poetry he ſent to the viceroy

whom Apollo has appointed to reign in his ſtead. He was ſenſible that this was but to ſend crows to Athens; but he thought it an homage due to the viceroy: like as certain *papegais* * ſects render homage to the old *vice-dieu* who governs at the city on the ſeven hills.

After having taken pills, you produce better verſes than any that are written at preſent in Europe. But were I to take all the rhubarb of Siberia, or all the ſenna pharmacy can afford, I never ſhould write a ſingle book of the Henriade.

Each man is born, my dear Voltaire, with a certain talent. Nature has beſtowed all her gifts on you; but the kind mother has not been equally liberal to every man. You write for fame, I for my amuſement; we both are ſucceſsful, though in a very different manner; for while the ſun ſhall enlighten the earth, while any tincture of ſcience ſhall remain, while there ſhall be one ſpark of good taſte exiſting, while minds ſhall be found that delight in ſublime thoughts, and ears open to the charms of harmony, your works ſhall remain, and your name ſhall fill the immenſe ſpace of ages, to the end of time.

Of me it will be ſaid—"That a king ſhould "eſcape being entirely an idiot, was much.

* *Papegais* is an old French term for Parrot. T.

"What

"What he has done is tolerable; had he been "a private perſon, he might have gained a "living by turning corrector of the preſs." After which, the book will be thrown down, or be ſent to the paſtry cook, and will no more be heard of.

But, as all people cannot write poetry when they pleaſe, and as paper is more eaſily ſpoiled in proſe, I ſend you a memorial intended for the academy. The ſubject is of a grave and philoſophic nature; and I flatter myſelf you will allow the truth of the principle which I have exerted myſelf, to the beſt of my abilities, to prove.

I hope this will procure me ſome pamphlets from Ferney. If you pleaſe, we will barter our wares; for by this trade I hope to profit. The harveſts of Ferney are richer than all the products of Thrace.

I wait your anſwer; aſſuring you that no one better knows the worth of the hermit of Caucaſus than the philoſopher of Sans-Souci.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXXI.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 17, 1770.

POOR Lorrain, whom you appear to recollect, finds a great difference between the copies which he now writes, and thoſe he formerly wrote. He now writes for the time preſent; eighteen years ago he wrote for immortality. He is not the leſs flattered by the approbation which you beſtow on his work, the ſubject of which is, ideas whoſe germ is to be found in the work of Helvetius on the Underſtanding, and in the Eſſays of D'Alembert. The one wrote with too much ſubtlety of metaphyſics, and the other did but ſketch his thoughts.

Poor Lorrain is ſenſible he does but teize you by ſending the reveries of his maſter; but the patriarch of Ferney, in conſequence of his elevated ſtation, muſt expect this kind of homage, and ſimilar importunity.

The patriarch demands poetry in the Gallic tongue from a Teutonic author, and poetry he ſhall have; but he will repent of the demand he has made. The verſes ſent are addreſſed to a lady

lady with whom he cannot but be acquainted. They were written in conſequence of a remark at table, made by this lady, in which ſhe complained of the difficulty of diſcovering a juſt medium, and of avoiding *the too much* and *the too little*. It is poetry written for private amuſement, ſuch as Paris formerly uſed to furniſh ample collections of, but which now is become more uncommon.

Poor Lorrain is much embarraſſed in his endeavours to diſcover the Genius of whom you ſpoke. He has ſought him every where, and may ſo continue to ſeek. The roſes and laurels have all been tranſplanted into Ruſſia; ſo that his ſearch will be in vain. Lorrain imagines that the vivid fancy which is triumphant, at Ferney, over infirmity and age, has drawn a fictitious picture of this Genius; and that he reſembles the garden of the Heſperides, and the fountain of Jouvence *, for which grave antiquity ſo long ineffectually ſought.

If however a good old dotard of a philoſopher, who inhabits a vineyard in this neighbourhood, be the Genius in queſtion, he has charged Lorrain to aſſure you he very much regrets the patriarch of Ferney; that he greatly wiſhes it

* See note to Letter CCCXV. T.

were

were again poſſible to welcome him, and to make him the aſſociate of his ſtudies; and that at leaſt this patriarch may reſt aſſured no one can be more ſenſible of his merit, or more enamoured of his fine genius.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Ferney, March 9, 1770.

TOO bleſt are you, who thus diſplay
Of wit ſo bright a flame;
Too curſt are others, while they feel
So little they can claim.

Too many gifts, of ev'ry kind,
Acknowledg'd are your due;
And princes, ſages, when compar'd,
Find they poſſeſs too few.

The Muſes partly baniſh'd France,
'Tis ſaid by ſome, in ſcoff,
Of learning we have not too much,
Of genius not enough.

A youth, I had too many hopes;
A man, too many cares;
Of wiſdom far too ſmall a part
My age declining ſhares.

With

With you had I but liv'd and died,
My bliſs had been too great;
Too little as it is, I ſtill
Have none to blame but Fate.

It is evident you have too much, and I too little, of all things. Your Epiſtle to Madame de Morian, on this ſubject, is charming. You have for thirty years daily continued to increaſe my aſtoniſhment. I can eaſily conceive that a young, indolent, Pariſian may write pleaſing French poetry, having nothing to do all the morning but to dreſs himſelf; but that a king of the North, who ſingly governs ſome twenty provinces, ſhould without difficulty write as well as Chaulieu, and verſes which are both poetical and the poetry of a man of the world, is a thing for which I cannot account. You vanquiſh us in Thuringia; and write poetry, in our own language, better than we ourſelves do. This certainly partakes of the too much; and you incite regret too deep in me, to find that I muſt not die in the preſence of your heroic and poetic majeſty.

LET-

LETTER CCCXXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, April 27, 1770.

WHEN you were ill, I was the ſame: I, like you, wrote both proſe and verſe; except indeed that my proſe and verſe were of very little value. I conclude I was formed to live and die with you; and that it is a misfortune that things are not thus.

While you become a jeſuit, I turn capuchin; which is an additional reaſon that ſhould have detained me at Berlin. It is however ſaid that brother Ganganelli has condemned my works; or at leaſt thoſe which the bookſellers vend under my name.

I ſhall write to inform his holineſs that I am a very good catholic, which I ſhall call upon your majeſty to atteſt.

I do not in the leaſt give up my ſaintſhip; and, as I am near death with an inflammation on the lungs, I beg you will be pleaſed to canonize me with all ſpeed. The act will only coſt you a thouſand crowns; nothing can be cheaper.

When it ſhall be time to canonize your majeſty, Marcus Aurelius muſt be addreſſed.

Your Dialogues are written in his taſte, and according to his principles. I am acquainted with no works more uſeful. You have found the ſecret of becoming the defender, the legiſlator, the hiſtorian, and the preceptor of your kingdom. This is not extravagance, but truth; though I defy any one to ſay as much of Muſtapha. You ought to take your meaſures ſo as to graſp ſome of the briſtles of this fat hog; for that would be to render a ſervice to the human race.

While the empire of Ruſſia and the Ottoman power encounter, with a ſhock ſo mighty that their claſhing is heard to all the ends of the earth, the petty republic of Geneva continues under arms. My manor is full of emigrants, who take refuge there. The city of John Calvin, at the preſent moment, affords no edification.

I never ſaw ſo much ſnow, and ſo much folly. I ſhall ſoon ſee neither, for I am dying.

Deign to accept the benediction of brother Francis, and to return me that of Saint Ignatius.

Remain a hero on earth, and do not abſolutely abandon the memory of a man whoſe ſoul has ever been the ſubject of yours.

LET-

LETTER CCCXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, May 4, 1770.

I FLATTER myself your health is entirely restored. I have formerly seen you cause yourself to be bled in the sole of the foot, immediately after a fit of the gout, and mount your horse the next day. You do even more than this at present. Your Marcus Aurelius Dialogues are much beyond an airing on horseback, or the business of a parade.

I know not whether your majesty be still as much addicted to pictures as you are to ethics. The empress of Russia is buying up paintings wherever she can. She has purchased as many as will amount to a hundred thousand livres (upward of four thousand pounds sterling) at Geneva; which may lead us to believe she has money enough remaining for her wars with Mustapha. I wish you would amuse yourself with Mustapha likewise, and share the fame of victory with her.

But I am desired to propose a picture to your majesty, and not a war with the Turks. M. Hennin, the French resident at Geneva, has the picture

picture of the Three Graces, by Vanloo; it is ſix feet in height, including the frame. He wiſhes to ſell it for eleven thouſand livres (almoſt five hundred pound ſterling) which is all I know of the affair. It was deſtined for the late king of Poland. Should it ſuit your new palace, you have but to iſſue your orders, and it will be ſent you. So ends my commiſſion.

Having almoſt loſt my ſight, among the ſnows of mount Jura, it is not for me to ſpeak of pictures. Nor am I little better able to ſpeak of poetry, in my preſent ſtate; for, if your majeſty have had the gout, your old ſervant has been dying with the conſequences of a cold. Inſtead of ſpring, it is winter with us, in our Alps. I know not whether nature be more kind to the ſands of Berlin, but I recollect it is always fine weather wherever your majeſty is.

Let me entreat you to preſerve me in your favour, and no more to have the gout. I am nearer to Paradiſe than you are, for you are only the protector of the jeſuits, and I am really a capuchin. I have the portrait of St. Francis, painted after the original.

I caſt myſelf at your feet, in deſpite of my honours divine.

FRIAR-FRANCIS-VOLTAIRE.

LET-

LETTER CCCXXV.

From the King.

Charlottenburg, May 24, 1770.

I BELIEVE you to be a moſt excellent capuchin friar, ſince it is your will ſo to be, and am even certain you will be canonized among the ſaints of the church. I know not one of them who is your equal; and I begin by ſaying, *Sancte Voltaire, ora pro nobis.*

The holy father however has been burning you at Rome; but do not think you are the only one whom he has thus diſtinguiſhed. The abridgment of Fleuri has undergone a ſimilar fate. There is I know not what affinity between us, which ſtrikes me. I am the protector of the jeſuits, and you of the capuchins. Your works are burnt at Rome; mine are the ſame. But you are a ſaint, and here I cede you the preference.

But how does it happen, good Mr. Saint, that you ſhould be aſtoniſhed to find there is war in Europe, and I not in the field? This is not very canonical of you. Know then that the philoſophers, by their perpetual declamations againſt what they call mercenary banditti, have rendered me

me pacific. The empreſs of Ruſſia may tilt at her pleaſure; ſhe has obtained, by the aid of ready money, a diſpenſation, from Diderot, to pit Ruſſians againſt Turks. For my part, dreading as I do philoſophic cenſure, encyclopedic excommunication, and the crime of treaſon againſt philoſophy, I remain at peace; and, as no book has yet appeared to interdict ſubſidies, I imagine I may be permitted, agreeable to natural and civil law, to pay my ally what I owe her; only being careful to obſerve the regulations of theſe preceptors of the human race, who arrogate to themſelves the right of flagellating princes, kings, and emperors, who diſobey their ordinances.

I have begun a new life, in conſequence of reading a work intitled, *Eſſais ſur les Préjugés**. I ſend you ſome remarks which a recluſe perſon, one of my friends, has written. I imagine my ſolitary friend is very much of your opinion, and delivers his ſentiments with that moderation from which you never depart, in writings which you acknowledge.

I do not think of my afflictions. Let my legs reconcile themſelves to the gout in the beſt manner they can: that is their affair; I have

* Eſſays on Prejudices.

other buſineſs to mind. I purſue my journey, hobbling, and limping, without troubling myſelf about ſuch trifles. When I was ill, and received your letter, the recollection of Panætius * reſtored my ſtrength. I remembered the anſwer of this philoſopher to Pompey, who was deſirous to hear him converſe; and I ſaid to myſelf, it would be diſgraceful to me, were I to allow the gout to prevent me from writing to you.

You mention Swiſs pictures to me; but I no longer buy paintings, now that I pay ſubſidies. It is neceſſary we ſhould preſcribe limits to our propenſities, as well as to our paſſions.

I moſt ſincerely pray for the recovery and full energy of your lungs; I do not think they will ſo ſoon forget to play as you imagine. Be ſatisfied with the miracles you work during your life, and do not be in any haſte to perform more after your death. Of the firſt you are certain; of the latter philoſophers ſeem to doubt.

On which I pray Saint John of the Wilderneſs, Saint Anthony, Saint Francis of Aſſize, and Saint Cucufin to take you into their holy keeping.

FREDERIC.

* This is a miſtake. Panætius was the friend of Scipio and Lælius, and died while Pompey was a child. Poſidonius was the philoſopher whom Pompey viſited. T.

LET-

LETTER CCCXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

June 8, 1770.

WHEN book which Friar Francis wrote
Cordeliers to the flames devote,
We know 'tis envy, and forbear
To wonder at their prieſtlike care.
But when a mighty monarch writes
In concert with ſuch doughty knights,
To ſee works iſſuing from a throne
Thus burnt, is ſtrange enough, I own!
I doubt this Pope, whom monks admire,
Is but a fooliſh kind of 'ſquire;
And think 'twere fit he ſhould be told
That he who graſps too much will little hold.

Your majeſty has met with a pleaſant return for having devoted yourſelf to Saint Ignatius. As for poor I, who am only one of the adherents of Saint Francis, all that is done againſt me may be forgiven.

The misfortune, ſire, is, that nothing is to be gained by puniſhing brother Ganganelli *. Would to God he had ſome good province in your neighbourhood; and that you were not ſo far from our Lady of Loretto!

* The Pope.

Fat harlequins, whom caps and cowls adorn,
To turn to ridicule, and hold to ſcorn
Them and their excommunicating thunder,
Were well; 'twere better ſtill their wealth to plunder.

Why will not you take charge of the vicarage of Simon-Barjona, while the empreſs ſweeps the duſt out of the temple of Mahomet? You would, thus combined, purge the earth of two ſtrange ſpecies of folly. I formerly conceived great hopes of you; but you are ſatisfied with laughing at Rome and me, with proceeding immediately to the point, and with being a very provident hero.

I have the Eſſay on Prejudices in my ſmall library, but have never read it. I attempted to run over a few paſſages; but, not meeting with any thing except words without meaning, I left the book where I found it. You have done it too much honour, by your criticiſms; but bleſſed may you be, for having found flints and cut them into diamonds. Bad books ſometimes do thus much good; that is, they are productive of uſeful ones.

Thus, where Apollo darts his quick'ning ray,
From mire impure the blooming lily ſprings.

Let me entreat your majeſty to endeavour to take pity on my old prejudices in favour of the Greeks

Greeks and againſt the Turks. I am better pleaſed with the family of Socrates than with the deſcendants of Orcan (Or-Khan) notwithſtanding my profound reſpect for monarchs.

You well know, ſire, that, were you not a king, my wiſh would have been to have lived and died with you.

The old ſick Hermit.

P. S. I perceive you will form no acquaintance with the Three Graces of M. Hennin; I own thoſe that inſpire you, when you write, much better deſerve the title of the Graces.

LETTER CCCXXVII.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, July 7, 1770.

No matter; if it be my turn,
Why let St. Peter's Vicar burn
My rhapſodies, in rev'rend ire:
I'll ſtand and warm me by the fire.
A Jeſuit, I, whene'er 'tis meet,
With chriſtian zeal, at Jeſus' feet
My humble works will humbly place;
Nor aſk for aid of ſaving grace.

But ſure this man, who keeps the door
Of heav'n, was drunk, or half ſeas o'er!

Elſe would he ne'er, with mad attaint,
Have treated thus our new-made ſaint.
But I appeal, as is but fit,
To the firſt council that ſhall ſit.
For, in great Loyola's deſpite,
Though I'm his true and truſty knight,
I ſhrewdly doubt St. Peter's Vicar
Is fallible—when he's in liquor.

Say what we will, this good cordelier of the Vatican is not ſo peeviſh as he is ſuppoſed to be; he only burns a few books, that an old cuſtom may not be forgotten. Beſide, your Roman noſtrils delight in ſnuffing up the odour of ſuch fumes.

But do you not admire to ſee with what patience, worthy of the Lamb without blemiſh, he has ſuffered the loſs of the county of Avignon? How little does he think of it; and in what harmony does he live with the Moſt Chriſtian King! For my part, I ſhould be wrong to complain of him; leaving me, as he does, in poſſeſſion of my dear Jeſuits, who every where elſe ſuffer perſecution. I preſerve the precious ſeed, that I may one day ſend a ſupply to thoſe who wiſh to cultivate, in their own grounds, ſo ſcarce a plant.

The ſame apathy cannot be attributed to the Grand Signior:

For

For had the turban'd Turk been quiet,
Nor interfer'd with Poliſh riot,
He ne'er had bluſh'd, and been abaſh'd,
At Spahis into mince-meat haſh'd;
He ne'er had felt, with dread alarm,
Chaſtiſement from a lady's arm,
A potent lady! Worth at leaſt
A brace of emp'rors of the eaſt!
Yes! With th' old hermit, I admire
The mighty mind that can aſpire
To fame ſo vaſt! She, ſmall or great,
For ev'ry exigence of ſtate
Provides; ordains, aſſumes, or grants;
Nor aſks for aid, for none ſhe wants!

It is therefore ſufficient for me to be a ſpectator of her great ſucceſs, to make war moſt philoſophically with the purſe, and to profit by theſe times of tranquillity, entirely to cure the wounds which the laſt war inflicted, and which ſtill continue to bleed.

And as for the Vicar, in God's name who rules,
I leave him in peace, with his beads and his bulls.
His trade is his torment! Condemn'd to reſide
In the darkneſs of ignorance, falſehood, and pride,
The god of the vulgar, the ſport of the ſage,
He trembles leſt light ſhould get into his cage.

Were Loretto beſide my vineyard, I certainly ſhould not invade its precincts. Its treaſures indeed might tempt men like Mandrin, Con-

ſians, Turpin, Richelieu, and their fellows. Not that I venerate the bequeſts which ignorance has held ſacred; but that which the public reveres muſt be ſpared. Offence muſt not be given. Be it ſuppoſed that we are wiſer than our neighbours, it is neceſſary, out of complaiſance, to have commiſeration on their foibles, and not to ſhock their prejudices.

It were to be wiſhed that the pretended philoſophers of our days thought the ſame. A work from their manufactory has fallen into my poſſeſſion, which appears to me ſo full of temerity, that I could not forbear to make ſome remarks on the *Syſtême de la Nature*; which ſyſtem the author arranges according to his manner.

Theſe remarks I communicate to you; and, ſhould I happen to fall in with your manner of thinking, I ſhall for this applaud myſelf. I add an eulogy on the death of one of my ſiſter's maids of honour, the loſs of whom ſhe very ſenſibly felt. I know I ſend nonſenſe to the greateſt poet of the age, who rivals all the perfection of all antiquity. But you ſhould recollect it was the cuſtom, in remote times, for poets to carry their tribute to the temple of Apollo. There was even, in the days of Auguſtus, a library dedicated to this god; in which Virgil, Ovid, and Horace publicly read their works.

works. In our age, when Ferney riſes on the ruins of the Delphic altars, it is but juſt that our offerings ſhould be ſent thither. Nothing is wanting, to the genius of thoſe abodes, except corporeal immortality.

Yet all is yours eternity can give;
For in your works your better ſelf ſhall live:
Your ſoul ſhall ſtill, in ev'ry place and age,
Inſtruct the ſimple, and delight the ſage.
Oh godlike deſtiny! Theſe works ſublime,
Borne on the never-flagging wing of Time,
What ſhall they not behold, what changes view!
Would that their author might behold them too!

Such are the wiſhes in which all men of letters ought to join. It is their duty to conſider you as a column which ſingly ſuſtains a building that is ready to fall, and the foundations of which are ſapped by barbarians. A ſwarm of mathematical myrmidons already perſecute the belles lettres, preſcribing laws to them for their degradation. What will become of them, when they ſhall want their ſole ſupport; and when the cold imitators of your fine genius ſhall pant in vain to replace your loſs? God preſerve me from having the ſhort and dry ſolutions of problems, as dull as they are uſeleſs, for my amuſement!

Let us not forebode an event ſo afflicting; let

let us rather continue to enjoy what we actually poſſeſs.

Hear! Handmaids of fair Venus, hear!
Ye Graces! Who, with willing ear,
Enraptur'd by his honied tongue,
So oft have liſten'd while he ſung;
Who, early won by all his arts,
Your favours granted with your hearts;
Hear! And on him your cares beſtow!
Plead with the Parcæ! Plead! For know,
With him ſo much you ſympathiſe,
You die yourſelves, whene'er he dies!

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, July 27, 1770.

YOU and the emperor of China are at preſent the only ſovereigns who are philoſophers and poets. I had juſt read an extract from two poems by the emperor, when I received the proſe and verſe of Frederic the Great.

I will ſpeak firſt of your proſe, the ſubject of which is intereſting to all men as well as to you maſters of mankind. Here we behold you like

Marcus

Marcus Aurelius, who, in his Moral Reflections, combated the ſyſtem of Lucretius.

I had previouſly ſeen a ſhort refutation of the Syſtem of Nature written by one of my friends. He has had the good fortune more than once to be of your majeſty's opinion. It is a good ſign, when a king and a private man think the ſame; their intereſts are often ſo oppoſite that, when they are united in opinion, they cannot be wrong.

It appears to me that your remarks ought to be printed: they are leſſons for the human race. With one arm you maintain the cauſe of God, and cruſh ſuperſtition with the other. It is well worthy of a hero publicly to adore God, and to beſtow flagellation on him who calls himſelf his vicar. Should you not intend to print your works in your metropolis, as Kienlong has lately cauſed his poems to be printed at Pekin, deign to commit them to my care, and I will publiſh them immediately.

Atheiſm never can do any good, and ſuperſtition has done infinite harm. Protect us from both the fearful gulphs. If any man be capable of rendering the world this ſervice, it is you.

You not only refute the author, but you teach

teach him in what manner he ought to act, in order to become uſeful.

You likewiſe take brother Ganganelli, and his diſciples, by the ears; and thus do juſtice to every body in your work. Friar Ganganelli, and his harlequins, ought well to know, with the reſt of Europe, who is the author of the excellent Preface to the Abridgment of Fleuri. Their abſurd inſolence is unpardonable. Your artillery might take Rome; but it would be by committing too much evil on every ſide, which would be injurious to yourſelf. This is not the age either of Hercules or of the Lombards, but that of Kienlong and Frederic. Ganganelli will be ſufficiently puniſhed by a ſtroke with your pen: your majeſty will reſerve your ſword for better occaſions.

Permit me to make you a ſhort remonſtrance, relative to the good underſtanding between kings and prieſts, with which the author of the Syſtem reproaches crowned heads and tonſured pates. You are much in the right, when you ſay there is no ſuch good underſtanding; and that our atheiſtical philoſopher is wholly unacquainted with the preſent ſtate of things. Such indeed were your arts formerly, my good lords; thus you began; thus did monarchs like Alboine, Theodoric, Clovis, and their immediate ſucceſſors,

ſucceſſors, manœuvre with the Popes—"Let us "divide the ſpoils; take you the tythes, and "leave me the reſt. Beſtow benediction on "my conqueſt, and I will protect your uſurpa- "tion. Let us fill our purſes. Affirm it to "be the will of God that I ſhould be obeyed, "and I will kiſs your feet."

This was their language; theſe were their treaties, ſigned with the blood of the people by conquerors and by prieſts; and here are what is called—*The Two Powers.*

The Two Powers afterward diſagreed; and you know how much this diſagreement coſt Italy and Germany. In fine, all is changed in our times: the devil of any *two* powers are there in your majeſty's ſtates, or in the vaſt empire of Catherine II. You therefore are right, relative to the time preſent; and the philoſophic atheiſt is right, relative to the time paſt.

Be it as it will, your work muſt be publiſhed. "Do not hide your candle under a buſhel," according to the text.

This earth ſtill wants the heav'nly light of day:
The ſage himſelf ſtill gropes his blindfold way.
Kings oft, like you, have ſcatter'd war and waſte;
But none like you could nurture truth and taſte.

What you have ſaid of my heroine Cathe-

rine

rine II. is charming; and well may induce me to be guilty of an act of infidelity to you.

I know not whether it be the hereditary prince of Brunſwick, or ſome other prince of that name, who is about to ſignalize himſelf in her behalf. This is the heroiſm of ancient knighthood, and of the age of the cruſades.

I own I cannot conceive why the Emperor did not ſeize the opportunity of taking Boſnia, and Servia, which would have coſt nothing more than the trouble of marching. The moment for driving the Turk out of Europe is loſt, and perhaps will never return; but I ſhould conſole myſelf during this uproar, ſhould your majeſty extend the limits of Pruſſia.

In the mean time, you liſten to the emotions of a feeling heart. When not a king, you are a man. Your verſes to the princeſs Amelia are the very ſoul to which I have for thirty years been attached, and to which I ſhall ſo remain, to the laſt moment of life, in deſpite of the evil your royalty has done me, and the counterpart of which I am now ſuffering, on the frontiers of my ſtrange native country.

LETTER CCCXXIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, Auguſt 18, 1770.

"DO not hide your candle under a "buſhel." This quotation muſt certainly be applied to you, whoſe genius is a torch that ought to enlighten the world. I had but a ſmall candle for my inheritance, ſcarcely ſufficient to enlighten myſelf, and the pale glimmering of which diſappears in the ſplendour of your rays.

When I had finiſhed my work againſt atheiſm, I thought my refutation moſt orthodox. I read it again, and found it very much the reverſe. There are parts of it which cannot appear, without terrifying the timid, and offending the devout. A ſhort paſſage which eſcaped me, on the eternity of the earth, would occaſion me to be lapidated in your country, had I been born a private perſon, and had I committed it to the preſs. I feel I have neither the ſoul nor the ſtyle of a theologian; I therefore ſatisfy myſelf with preſerving the freedom of my own opinions, without ſowing my ſeed in a land where it would not grow.

The ſame cannot be ſaid of the verſes on the empreſs of Ruſſia. To your diſcretion I abandon them. Her troops, by one continued chain of ſucceſs and proſperity, juſtify all I have aſſerted. You will ſoon ſee the Sultan petition for peace from Catherine; and ſhe, by her moderation, will add new luſtre to her victories.

I know not why the Emperor does not interfere in the war. I am not his ally; but his ſecrets ought to be known to the duke de Choiſeul, who can explain them to you.

The cordelier of Saint Peter has burnt my writings; but has not excommunicated me, at Eaſter, as has been the cuſtom with his predeceſſors. By this proceeding I am reconciled to him; for I have a forgiving heart, and you know how much I love to communicate.

I am departing for Sileſia, and going to meet the Emperor, who has invited me to his camp in Moravia; not to fight, as we formerly did, but to live like good neighbours. He is an amiable and very meritorious prince; he loves your works, and reads them as often as he can. He is very far from being ſuperſtitious. In fine, he is an emperor ſuch as has not long been ſeen in Germany. We neither of us love the ignorant, or barbarians; but this is no reaſon why they ought to be extirpated. If their deſtruction

ſtruction were neceſſary, the Turks would not fall ſingly. How many nations are plunged in brutality, and become ſavages, for want of knowledge!

But let us live ourſelves, and ſuffer others to live likewiſe. May you, in particular, live long, and never forget there are people, in the north of Germany, who inceſſantly do juſtice to your fine genius!

Adieu. On my return from Moravia I will ſay more to you.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXXX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, Auguſt 12, 1770.

THE philoſopher D'Alembert informs me that the great philoſopher of the ſect and the ſpecies of Marcus Aurelius, the ſtudent and the protector of the arts, is kindly deſirous to encourage anatomy, by deigning to place himſelf at the head of thoſe who have ſubſcribed for a ſkeleton. This ſkeleton is inhabited by an old but very feeling ſoul, which is penetrated by the honour it has received from your majeſty.

I have long ſuppoſed that the idea of ſuch a caricature was merely a joke; but, ſince the chiſſel of the famous Pigal is really employed on the work, and ſince the name of the greateſt man in Europe adorns the enterprize of my fellow-citizens, I know nothing more ſerious. I feel myſelf humbled, when I recollect how unworthy I am of the honour done me; yet at the ſame time indulge in the moſt lively ſenſations of gratitude.

The French Academy has tranſcribed the letter, with which you have honoured M. d'Alembert on this ſubject, into the academical regiſters. I heard all this at one and the ſame time. I am amazed! I am at your feet! I return you my thanks—I know not what to ſay.

Providence, willing to lower the pride which is inflated by ſo many favours, has willed that the Turks ſhould recover Greece; at leaſt has ſuffered the gazettes to affirm the truth of the fact. This to me is a fatal blow. Not that I have one inch of land in the neighbourhood of Athens, or of Corinth. Alas! I have no land except in the neighbourhood of Swiſſerland. But you know what a banquet I ſhould enjoy, could I but ſee the deſcendants of Sophocles and Demoſthenes freed from the tyranny of an ignorant baſhaw. Your excellent refutation of the

Syſtem

Syſtem of Nature would then be tranſlated into Greek; and would be printed, with a fine engraving, at the place where formerly the Lyceum ſtood.

I likewiſe have ventured to write an anſwer. Thus God has two men the leaſt ſuperſtitious of any in Europe on his ſide; which cannot but give him much pleaſure. But I find my anſwer ſo inferior to yours that I dare not ſend it you. Beſide, while laughing at the eels of the jeſuit Needham, which Buffon, Maupertuis, and the tranſlator of Lucretius, had adopted as truth, I could not forbear to laugh likewiſe at all their excellent ſyſtems; at that of Buffon, who pretends that the Alps have been manufactured by the ſea; at that which makes man the deſcendant of the ſea hog; and at that of him who heated his imagination, that he might predict the future.

I have the irreparable injury he did me ever at heart. I never think of the calumny of *the dirty linen to be waſhed*, a ſtory as inſipid as to me it was fatal, and of all which followed, but with a degree of grief that poiſons my latter end. But what I have heard, from D'Alembert, of the bounty of your majeſty, is a balm ſo efficacious for my wounds, that I reproach myſelf for this grief, by which I am continually

haunted! Pardon ſuch affliction in a man whoſe only ambition was to live and die with you, and who has been more than thirty years devoted to you.

There are ſeveral copies of your admirable work. Suffer it to be publiſhed, either ſingly or in ſome collection, for it certainly will appear, and will be incorrectly printed. Should your majeſty deign to give me orders to this purpoſe, the homage paid by the philoſopher of Sans-Souci to the Deity will be for the good of mankind. The king of the deiſts will at once confound both fanatics and atheiſts; nothing could produce a better effect.

Deign to accept the tender reſpect of the old hermit,

VOLTAIRE.

LETTER CCCXXXI.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 16, 1770.

I WAS not vexed to find that the ſentiments which I diſcovered, relative to your ſtatue, in a letter written to M. d'Alembert, had have divulged. They are truths of which I have

have ever been intimately convinced, and which neither Maupertuis nor any perſon has effaced from my mind. It is exceedingly juſt that you ſhould, during life, enjoy the public gratitude; and that I ſhould take ſome part in this diſplay of applauſe by your cotemporaries, having like them received ſo much pleaſure from your works.

The trifles I write are not of this kind; they are but my amuſement. I inſtruct myſelf while I think on ſubjects of philoſophy, and on which I ſometimes too daringly ſcribble my thoughts. The remarks on the Syſtem of Nature are too bold for preſent readers, into whoſe hands they might fall. I wiſh not to offend any perſon; while writing I did but converſe with myſelf. Whenever the queſtion occurs of ſpeaking publicly, it is my conſtant maxim to ſpare the delicacy of ſuperſtitious ears, to ſhock no perſon, and to wait till the age may be ſufficiently enlightened to ſuffer us to think aloud with impunity.

Let me beg you, therefore, to leave ſuch feeble works in that obſcurity to which they have been condemned by their author. Inſtead of them, beſtow on the public that which you have written on the ſame ſubject, and which will be preferable to my loquacity.

I hear no more mention of the modern Greeks. If the ſciences ſhould ever again flouriſh among them, they will be jealous that a Gaul with his Henriade has ſurpaſſed their Homer; that this ſame Gaul is ſuperior to Sophocles, equal to Thucydides, and has left Plato, Ariſtotle, and the whole portico-ſchool far in the rear.

For my part, I imagine the barbarians, who are in poſſeſſion of theſe beautiful countries, will be obliged to implore the clemency of their victors; and that they will find, in the ſoul of Catherine, as much moderation for the promoting of peace, as energy in carrying on the war. With reſpect to that fatality which preſides over events, according to the pretenſions of the author of the Syſtem of Nature, I know not when it will effect ſuch revolutions as may revive the ſciences, which ſo long have remained buried in theſe enſlaved countries, robbed of their ancient ſplendour.

My principal occupation is to combat that ignorance, and thoſe prejudices, that exiſt in the countries which the chance of birth has given me to govern. I endeavour to inſtruct the mind, to encourage morality, and to render men as happy as is conſiſtent with human nature

ture to be; as far as the means which are in my power can conduce to theſe purpoſes.

I am now but juſt returned from a long journey. I have been in Moravia, and again have ſeen that emperor who is preparing to act a great part in Europe. Born in a bigoted court, he has ſhaken off the yoke of ſuperſtition; educated in pomp, he has adopted ſimplicity of manners; fed by flattery, he is modeſt; burning with all the ardour of fame, he ſacrifices his ambition to filial duty, to which he ſcrupulouſly conforms; and, though his teachers have all been pedants, he has taſte enough to read Voltaire, and to eſteem his merits.

Should you not be ſatisfied with this true portrait, I muſt confeſs you are difficult to pleaſe. Beſide the advantages I have mentioned, he is well acquainted with Italian literature. He cited many lines from Taſſo to me; and repeated almoſt the whole of the *Paſtor Fido*.

It is neceſſary to begin by ſuch ſtudies; to which ſucceeds, in our riper years, the ſtudy of philoſophy; and, after having well examined philoſophic ſubjects, we are obliged, like Montagne, to aſk—"What know I?"

There is one thing I certainly know, which is that I ſhall have a copy of the buſt on which Pigal is at work. Unable to obtain the origi-

nal, I ſhall at leaſt have a copy. This is to be contented with little, when we recollect that formerly we poſſeſſed the divine genius himſelf. Youth is the age of good fortune; when we become old and decrepit, we muſt renounce wits, as we do women.

Preſerve yourſelf with care, that, though old, you may continue to inſtruct the concluſion of the preſent century; the glory of which is to poſſeſs you, and which is acquainted with the worth of its treaſure.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXXXII.

From the King.

Berlin, September 26, 1770.

IT muſt be allowed that we inhabitants of Germany are deſtitute of imagination. Father Bouhours aſſures us of the fact, and we cannot but take his word. As for you clear-ſighted citizens of Paris, your imagination teaches you to diſcover relations between objects, where we ſhould not have ſuppoſed the leaſt connection. In truth, the prophet, be him who he will, who has done me the honour to amuſe himſelf

himſelf at my expence, treats me with diſtinction. Theſe gentry do not heat their imaginations in favour of every man. I imagine myſelf a perſon of ſome importance; and nothing more is wanting than a comet, or at leaſt an eclipſe, which ſhall honour me by its attention, to completely turn my brain.

But all this was not neceſſary for me to do juſtice to Voltaire, for which a grateful and a feeling heart were fully ſufficient. It is but juſt that the public ſhould pay for the pleaſure it has received. Never had author ſo pure, ſo perfect a taſte, as this great man. Profane Greece would have made a god of him, and have built a temple in his honour. We do but raiſe a ſtatue. Feeble recompence for all the perſecutions which have been excited againſt him by envy! Yet is it a reward capable of warming the mind of youth, and encouraging it to riſe to that height to which this great genius has mounted. The field he has reaped may ſtill be gleaned by his ſucceſſors. From my infancy I have loved the arts, ſciences, and letters; and, whenever I am able to contribute to their progreſs, I am inclined ſo to do with all ardour; becauſe without them there is no true happineſs in this world. You who are ſeated in the veſtibule of their temple at Paris, you who

who aſſiſt at their altars, you are able to enjoy this unalterable happineſs; provided you do but impede the approach of envy and cabal.

I thank you for the intereſt you take in the child which is born to us*. I wiſh he may be endowed with the qualities neceſſary for his rank; and that, far from becoming the ſcourge of humanity, he may be its benefactor.

On which I pray God to take you into his holy keeping.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXXXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, October 12, 1770.

M. D'ALEMBERT and I have enjoyed a fortnight's happineſs, for we have continually ſpoken of your majeſty. This is what all thinking beings do; and, if there be any ſuch in Rome, Ganganelli is not the ſubject of their converſations.

I know not whether the health of D'Alembert will permit him to go to Italy. He may very well be ſatisfied with paſſing the winter in

* Prince Frederic William, grand nephew to the king.

the

the ſunſhine of Provence, and with beſtowing his eloquence, of which the philoſophic hero is the ſubject, on the deſcendants of our old Troubadours. For my part, my weak voice is only heard among the Swiſs, and repeated by the echoes of the Lake of Geneva.

I was the more affected by your laſt letter, becauſe I had lately dared to make your majeſty an example to myſelf. This expreſſion may at firſt appear rather ridiculous: for in what can an old ſpoiler of paper imitate the Hero of the North? But you know that philoſophers came to demand rules from Marcus Aurelius, when he departed for Moravia, from which your majeſty is returned.

I wiſh to be able to imitate you in eloquence, and in the excellent portrait you have drawn of the Emperor. Your pencil convinces me it is the maſter who has painted his ſcholar.

The imitation at which I have aſpired is this: it was to give refuge, in the huts of my hamlet, to ſome people of Geneva, who have eſcaped the muſket-balls of their countrymen, when I knew that your majeſty had deigned to protect them like a king at Berlin.

I ſaid to myſelf, "the greateſt of men may "teach the leaſt to do good." Some years ſince, I wiſhed to have ſettled another colony at

at Cleves; and I am certain it would have been more flouriſhing, and more worthy of the protection of your majeſty. Never ſhall I conſole myſelf for not having executed this plan, with which I ought to have ended my old age. May your life be as long as it is uſeful to the world, and glorious to yourſelf!

I have juſt heard that the prince of Brunſwic, ſent by you to the victorious army of the Ruſſians, has there been taken ill and died. The world has loſt a hero; and this is a double compliment of condolence to your majeſty. He had but a glimpſe of life and glory. Yet, after all, what more have thoſe who live to the age of a hundred? I had but a momentary glimpſe of Frederic the Great. I admire him, am attached to him, thank him, and ſhall remain penetrated by his bounties during the moment I ſtill have to live. Such is what I am certain of, concerning the preſent and the paſt.

As to eternity, that is entirely an ambiguous affair. All which ſurrounds us is the empire of doubt; and doubt is a diſagreeable ſituation. Is there any God, ſuch as he is ſaid to be; any ſoul, ſuch as has been imagined; any connections between time and futurity, ſuch as have been affirmed? Is any thing to be hoped, after the breath is departed from the body? Had

Gilimer,

Gilimer, who had been ſtripped of his ſtates, reaſon to laugh, when he came into the preſence of Juſtinian? Had Cato reaſon to kill himſelf, from his fear of meeting Cæſar? Is fame any thing more than deluſion? Is it poſſible for Muſtapha, in his effeminate haram, there committing all poſſible follies, ignorant, haughty, and vanquiſhed, if he happen to digeſt well, to be more happy than a philoſophic hero whoſe digeſtion is bad?

Are all beings equal in the preſence of that grand Being which animates nature? In ſuch a caſe, the ſoul of Ravaillac will ever remain the equal of that of Henry IV; or elſe neither of them had any ſoul. I leave the philoſophic hero to unravel all this; for my own part, I underſtand nothing of the matter.

I remain, from the depths of my chaos, penetrated with reſpect, gratitude, and attachment for your perſon; and a nonentity to almoſt every thing elſe.

LETTER CCCXXXIV.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 30, 1770.

A MITE, that vegetates in the north of Germany, is but a trifling ſubject for converſation between philoſophers; who diſcuſs on the various worlds that float in infinite ſpace; of the principle of motion, and life; of time and eternity; of mind and matter; and of things poſſible, and things impoſſible.

I am very apprehenſive this mite has led the minds of theſe great philoſophers aſtray from more important objects, on which they might have been more worthily employed. Emperors and kings diſappear, in the immenſe picture which nature preſents to the eyes of the ſpeculative. You, who are capable of all things, occaſionally deſcend from your empyrean; Anaxagoras now, and anon Triptolemus, you quit the portico for agriculture, and afford an aſylum to the unfortunate. I ſhould prefer the colony of Ferney, which has Voltaire for its lawgiver, to that of the quakers of Philadelphia, whoſe legiſlator was Locke.

We have fugitives here of another ſpecies; people

people from Poland, who, in dread of the depredations, pillage, and cruelties of their countrymen, have ſought an aſylum in Pruſſia. There are more than a hundred and twenty noble families that have exiled themſelves, in expectation of more tranquil times, hoping then to return home in ſafety. I am more and more convinced that men are men, from one end of the globe to the other; and that they mutually trouble and perſecute each other as much as they have the power. Their happineſs, their only reſource, is in the benevolence of the few who welcome and conſole them in their adverſity.

You alſo take part in the loſs I have lately ſuffered, at the Ruſſian army, by the death of my nephew of Brunſwic. His life was not of ſufficient duration for him to diſtinguiſh between what it was neceſſary he ſhould know, and of what he ought to remain in ignorance. That he might leave however ſome traces of exiſtence behind him, he has ſketched out an epic poem; the ſubject of which is the conqueſt of Mexico by Fernando Cortes. The work contains twelve books; but length of life was wanting to render it leſs defective. Were it poſſible for any thing to exiſt after life, he certainly at preſent knows more than all of us collectively. But there is

great probability that he is now in total ignorance. A philoſopher of my acquaintance, a man tolerably determinate in his opinions, imagines that we have a ſufficient number of probabilities to obtain a certitude that—*poſt mortem nihil eſt.*

He pretends man is no double being; that we are nothing more than matter animated by motion; and that, as ſoon as the worn-out wheels refuſe to act, the machine is deſtroyed, and its parts are diſunited.

This philoſopher adds, it is much more difficult to ſpeak of God than of man: for, of the former, we have only been able to ſuſpect his exiſtence by the aid of conjecture; and that all which reaſon can furniſh the leaſt objectionable, reſpecting him, is that of believing him the intelligent principle which animates all nature. My philoſopher is exceedingly well perſuaded that this intelligent principle troubles himſelf no more concerning Muſtapha than concerning the Moſt Chriſtian King; and that he is as little diſturbed by what may happen to men, as by what may happen to an ant-hill, which the foot of the traveller may cruſh, unperceived by himſelf.

My philoſopher conſiders animal life as an accident of nature; like to the duſt which is put

in

in motion by wheels, although the intention of making the wheel was merely that of ſwiftly aiding the progreſs of the carriage. This ſtrange man affirms, there is no relation between animals and the Supreme Intelligence, becauſe ſuch feeble creatures can neither injure nor do him ſervice; that our vices and virtues are all relative to ſociety; and that the pains and pleaſures which we receive from ſociety are fully adequate to produce their proper effects.

Were there but a ſacred judgment ſeat called the Inquiſition here, I ſhould have been ſtrongly tempted to broil my philoſopher, for the edification of his neighbours. But we poor hugonots are deprived of this ſweet conſolation; not to add that, perhaps, my own clothes might have caught fire. With an afflicted heart, therefore, at hearing his diſcourſe, I determined to make my remonſtrances. You are not orthodox, ſaid I, my friend; you would be unanimouſly condemned by the general councils; and God the Father (who always keeps councils in his breeches pockets, to conſult them in caſe of need, like as doctor Tamponet carries with him the ſummary of Saint Thomas) would employ theſe councils to judge you with all ſeverity.

Inſtead of yielding to ſuch ſtrong arguments, my reaſoner replied, that he congratulated me

on my perfect acquaintance with the roads of heaven and hell; that he exhorted me to publish a map of the country, with an itinerary, to regulate the resting places of travellers, and particularly to tell them which are the best inns.

This is all a man gets by wishing to convert infidels: I give them up to their own way. Opinion is a point on which we may say, let each take care of himself; for our part, our faith promises us that we shall proceed in a right line to Paradise.

Take care, however, to be in no haste to undertake this journey. The *I have it*, of this world, is of more worth than ten times *thou shalt have*, in the next. Give laws to your colony from Geneva; labour for the honour of Parnassus; enlighten the world; send me your refutation of the System of Nature; and, with my good wishes, accept all those of the inhabitants of the North and of these regions.

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCCXXXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, November 21, 1770.

YOUR majeſty may be a worm, or a mite, when compared to the Eternal Architect of worlds; or even to inferior deities, which are ſuppoſed to have been formed by him; nor can the impoſſibility of ſuch a ſuppoſition be demonſtrated. But, in compariſon with ſuch poor creatures as other men, you have often been the eagle, the lion, and the ſwan. You are not at preſent the mouſe, hidden in his Dutch cheeſe, that ſhuts his door againſt other indigent mice; you exert your hoſpitality in behalf of the diſtreſſed and perſecuted Poliſh families. You ought to know that you, more than any mite in the world, are entitled to glory; and the fame which you at preſent acquire is not of the worſt kind.

True it is that moſt men reſemble each other; if not in abilities, at leaſt in vice. Not but there is, after all, a great difference between Pythagoras and a Swiſs, from his petty cantons, who has made himſelf drunk with wretched wine.

As to the Poliſh government, it reſembles nothing that can any where elſe be found.

The prince of Brunſwick, I find, was one of your family. He wrote verſes like your majeſty and the king of China. Judge whether he be or be not regretted by me.

I fear as much as you that he is entirely ignorant of the grand ſecret of nature, dead though he be. Your abominable philoſopher, who is ſo certain that all dies with the man, may be very much in the right; as well as the author of the Eccleſiaſtes, attributed to Solomon, which preaches this opinion in twenty places; as well as Cæſar and Cicero, who declared it in full ſenate; as well as the author of the Troades, who avowed it upon the ſtage, in the preſence of forty or fifty thouſand Romans; and as well as ſo many wicked people at preſent, who think the ſame; which they ſeem to prove from a ſtate of profound ſleep, or from obſerving a man in a lethargy.

I know not what Muſtapha may think on this ſubject; though I ſuſpect he does not think at all, but that he lives according to the manner of ſome other Muſtaphas of his ſpecies. With reſpect to the empreſs of Ruſſia, the queen of Sweden your ſiſter, the king of Poland, prince Guſtavus, &c. I imagine I know what they think. You have likewiſe given me to hope that the

Emperor

Emperor was in the road to perdition: philoſophy has in him a good recruit.

What a pity is it that there will ſoon be neither hell nor heaven in exiſtence! They were really intereſting ſubjects. We ſhall preſently be obliged to love God for his own ſake, without fear or hope, after the manner in which we love a mathematical truth. Yet this kind of love is not the moſt vehement; the love of truth is cold and unimpaſſioned.

It muſt however be added, that your deteſtable philoſopher has no demonſtration on his ſide; he has nothing but extreme probability. Ganganelli ought to be conſulted, for it is ſaid he is a good theologian. Should that be ſo, there is great reaſon to ſuppoſe he is not a perfect Chriſtian. But a conjuror will not betray his ſecret. He boils pot for himſelf, as the marquis d'Argenſon ſaid of one of the kings of Europe.

If nothing be demonſtrable, except in mathematics, doubt not, ſire, but that, of all probable truths, the moſt irrefragable is, that your fame will be immortal; and that my reſpectful attachment to you will end only when my wretched being ſhall be ſubjected to that law which awaits the greateſt of kings, as it does the moſt inſignificant of the Gauls.

LETTER CCCXXXVI.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 24, 1770.

I THANK you for the fine lines that accompanied your letter. I have read the poem of our Chineſe brother; which is not in what is called the European ſtyle, but which may pleaſe at Pekin.

A ſhip which is lately arrived from China, at Embden, has brought a letter in verſe from that emperor; and, as I am known to be a lover of poetry, it has been ſent to me. The great difficulty was to procure a tranſlation; but we have very luckily been aided by the famous profeſſor Ernulphius Enſerius Quadrazius. He did not ſatisfy himſelf with a verſion in proſe; becauſe it is his opinion that poetry ought to be tranſlated into poetry. You ſhall have a ſight of the piece, with which you may enrich your Chineſe library. Though our grave profeſſor pleads the difficulty of tranſlation, he eſtimates ſome ſoleciſms, which have eſcaped him, at nothing; as he likewiſe does ſome bad rhymes, which ought not to be conſidered as defective, when

when it is the work of an emperor that is tranſlated.

You will perceive what is thought, in China, of the ſucceſs and victories of the Ruſſians. I can aſſure you, however, that our intelligence from Conſtantinople makes no mention of your pretended ſoldan of Egypt; and I take what has been reported to be nothing more than a tale dreſſed up by a news-writer. Would you, who have at all times declaimed againſt war, wiſh to perpetuate the preſent? Know you not that Muſtapha, with his pipe, is the ally of the Gauls, and of Choiſeul, who has haſtily ſent off a detachment of engineer and artillery officers to fortify the Dardanelles? Are you ignorant that, were there no Grand Turk, the temple of Jeruſalem would be rebuilt; that there would no longer be any Seraglio; no more Mamamouchi *; no more ablutions; and that certain powers, in the neighbourhood of Belgrade, intereſt themſelves much in behalf of the Alcoran? Do you not know that, however glorious war may be, peace is ſtill preferable?

I ſalute the original of a certain ſtatue; and recommend this original to Apollo, the god of

* See note to Letter VI. of D'Arget's correſpondence, Vol. XII. T.

health, as well as to Minerva, that they may watch for his preſervation.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 12, 1770.

THE damnable philoſopher, againſt whom your choler riſes, is not ſatisfied with reaſoning incomprehenſibly; he begins to dream, and he wiſhes me to ſend you his reveries. That I might rid myſelf of his importunity, I have been obliged to comply with his requeſt; and I here ſend you his ſtrange prattle. Do not accuſe me of indiſcretion. Should his jargon fatigue you, rank it with the Tale of Blue-beard, the Thouſand-and-one Nights, &c.

I have adviſed him, in order to correct the propenſity he has to indulge his fancy, to ſtudy tranſcendent geometry, which will ſpunge up whatever may be too poetical in his brain, and render him the worthy brother of your grave Tuetonic philoſophers, and profeſſors, whoſe names terminate in *us*. This branch of geometry may perhaps demonſtrate that he has a ſoul.

Moſt

Moſt of thoſe, who believe themſelves poſſeſſed by ſouls, have never once thought on the ſubject; and, as you ſay, I do not believe that either Muſtapha, or many others, have ever troubled themſelves with ſuch a queſtion; nor are there any, except thoſe who follow the advice given in the Greek apothegm, *Know thyſelf*, who wiſh to enquire what they are. And even theſe, in proportion as they advance in knowledge, are obliged to forget what they thought they before knew.

The grand cordelier of Saint Peter appears to me to be a man who knows where he ought to ſtop: but he is paid not to reveal the ſecrets of the church; and I would wager that he troubles himſelf much more concerning Avignon than concerning the celeſtial Jeruſalem. For my own part, I take care to be diſcreet, and not to importune a man with whom it ought to be a matter of conſcience not to rob him of a moment. His moments are ſo well employed that I wiſh him many of them; and that he may endure as long as his ſtatue. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCCXXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

December 20, 1770.

REALLY this king of China writes charming letters. Oh how is his ſtyle improved ſince his eulogium of Moukdem! How much juſtice does he render the freebooter, the Jewiſh ſaint, named David; as well as he does to our *Badauts* * of Paris. I ſuſpect his majeſty Kienlong has no mandarin with him capable of underſtanding him; but that he ſings, like Orpheus, to beautiful lions, courageous leopards, well-diſciplined wolves, and falcons properly taught.

I formerly went to the court of this king, and wondered at his army, but a thouſand times more at himſelf. I own, ſire, I never was preſent at more agreeable ſuppers, than thoſe to which Kienlong the Great deigned to admit me. I proteſt to you I ſhall take the liberty to love him, as long as he ſhall oblige me to admire him; and that, had I not been ſlandered by a Laplander †, I ſhould never have conceived

* *Badaut*, ſpoken of a Pariſian, ſignifies much the ſame as our word *cockney*. T.

† Alluding to Maupertuis's Voyage to Lapland. T.

any happineſs equal to that of remaining at Pekin.

True it is I have made a very great fortune in the Weſt; and that, though one abbé Terray has pilfered the greateſt part of it from me, an accident that would not have happened to me at Pekin, I have ſtill enough to be more happy than I deſerve to be. I nevertheleſs continue to regret Kienlong, whom I regard as the greateſt man of the two hemiſpheres. As he ſpeaks the French language perfectly, although he did not learn it from the reverend fathers the Jeſuits, and as he writes in that language with more grace and energy than three-fourths of our academicians, I have been free enough to ſend him by the coach three new books, with this addreſs—To THE KING; for it is ſaid there are not two kings, and the Sultan and the Mogul are but little ſpoken of at preſent. To this addreſs the following words are added—"To "be put in the poſt as ſoon as the packet ſhall "arrive in his dominions." This is a tribute ſent to the library of Sans-Souci from China; a tribute which I do not think worthy of his majeſty, for it is but the thigh of the graſshopper which the great Yhao will not diſdain.

His majeſty is the neighbour of my grand Ruſſian ſovereign. I ſtill continue ſorry that they

they have not combined and adjuſted affairs ſo as to ſend Muſtapha his diſmiſſion. I alſo remain in the dark relative to Ali Bey. She herſelf * is the ſame. Why has ſhe not ſent ſome Jew into thoſe parts, to enquire into the truth? The Jews have always loved Egypt, in deſpite of the aſſertions in their impertinent hiſtory.

I well knew what would be done by engineers without genius †, and was much afflicted. I think all this is as ill underſtood as were the cruſades; and that there might be a good intelligence kept up, by which it would be poſſible to ſtrike very excellent ſtrokes.

I much fear the Gauls, and even the Iberians, may be foiled: their enterprizes have long had no other effect than that of ruining us.

I thrice ſtrike my forehead to earth, in preſence of your throne of Pegu, which is in the neighbourhood of the throne of China.

* *Elle-même.* There is a grammatical ambiguity in this pronoun, which may be the relative to *ſa majeſté*; ſhould it be ſo the text ought to be *he himſelf*; and why has *he* not, &c. *Ma ſouveraine*, however, by being the laſt of the two nouns, appears to have the ſtrongeſt claim to the relative pronoun. T.

† Here is a play on words; for, in the French, *genie* ſignifies both genius and the art of fortification. T.

LETTER CCCXXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

Ferney, January 11, 1771.

To the Auguſt Prophet of the Lew Naw.

GREAT PROPHET!

YOU reſemble your predeceſſors ſent from the Moſt High; you perform miracles. To you am I indebted for life: I was dying, amid the ſnows of Helvetia, when your ſacred viſion was brought to me. As I proceeded in reading it, the head became clear, the blood flowed freely, and the ſoul was re-animated. At the ſecond page I recovered my ſtrength; and, by a ſingular property in this celeſtial medicine, it reſtored my appetite, by diſguſting me with every other food.

The Almighty formerly commanded your predeceſſor Ezekiel to eat a roll of parchment. I would willingly have eaten your paper, but that I would a hundred times more willingly read it again. You are the holy one, ſent by Jehovah; ſince you are the only one who ſpeaks truth, while you mock at all your brethren. Jehovah has therefore bleſſed you, by ſeating you more firmly on your throne, by

ſharpening

ſharpening your pen, and by illuminating your ſoul.

Thus hath the Lord ſpoken:

This is he of whom I propheſied. Every mountain and hill ſhall be made low; the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough places plain. This is he that cometh. He will teach the children of men that they may be valiant yet merciful, great yet ſimple, eloquent yet poetical; for it is I who have taught him all theſe things. Him did I enlighten, when he came into the world; that he might make me known, ſuch as I am, and not ſuch as the fooliſh children of men have deſcribed me. For I call all the planets of the univerſe to witneſs that I, their Creator, never was ſcourged with thorns, nor hanged like a malefactor on this mole-hill called earth; that I never inſpired any Jew, nor crowned any Pope: but that I have ſent, in the fulneſs of time, my ſervant Frederic; who doth not call himſelf my anointed, becauſe anointed he is not; but he is my ſon, and my image; and I have ſaid to him—"My ſon, it is not ſuffi-"cient for thee to have made thy enemies thy "footſtool, and to have given laws to thy coun-"try; but it is further requiſite that thou "ſhouldſt for ever drive ſuperſtition from this "globe."

And

And the great Frederic anſwered, and ſaid to Jehovah:

"I have driven the monſter ſuperſtition from "my heart, and from the hearts of all thoſe "who were near me. But, my father, you "have formed this world in ſuch a manner, that "I am unable to do good, except to thoſe "over whom I am appointed; and even to "them with ſome difficulty. In what manner "muſt I act, to inſpire the people of Rome, "Naples, and Madrid, with common ſenſe?"

And Jehovah then ſpoke, and ſaid:

"Thy examples and thy leſſons will ſuffice: "continue long to give them, my ſon; and I "will bid the ſeed ſpring up, and produce "fruits in their ſeaſon."

And the great prophet anſwered:

"Oh Jehovah! Thou art moſt mighty! "Yet do I defy thee to render all men rational. "Believe what I ſay, and be ſatisfied with a "ſmall number of the elect; for never will "more be thine."

LETTER CCCXL.

From the King.

Berlin, January 29, 1771.

WHILE reading your letter I ſhould have imagined the correſpondence between Ovid and king Cotys had ſtill been continued, had I not met with the name Voltaire at the bottom. It differs nothing from that of the Latin poet; except that Ovid had the complaiſance to compoſe verſes in the Thracian language, whereas your verſes are written in your native tongue.

I at the ſame time received the encyclopedic queſtions, which may moſt properly be called encyclopedic inſtructions. The work is full of matter. What variety, what knowledge, what depth! With what art do you infuſe, into ſubjects ſo various, the ſame attractive charms! Might I ſpeak in an affected ſtyle, I ſhould ſay that every thing in your hands is turned to gold.

I ought to return you thanks, in the name of all ſoldiers, for the account which you have given of the evolutions of a battle. Though I knew you to be great in literature, great in philoſophy, and great in poetry, I was ignorant

that to ſo many talents you added the knowledge of a great captain. The rules which you give, in tactics, are certain proofs that you judge that intermittent fever of kings, called war, to be leſs dangerous than it is repreſented to be by certain authors.

But with what edificatory circumſpection do you treat on articles of faith! Your pediculous diſciples * have been in raptures; the Sorbonne will make you one of its corps; the Moſt Chriſtian, ſhould he read, will bleſs heaven, to find he has ſo orthodox a gentleman of the chamber; and the biſhop of Orleans will aſſign you a ſeat by the ſide of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob. Your relics will indiſputably work miracles, and the *infamous* —— will certainly celebrate her triumph!

But whither is the philoſophic ſpirit of the eighteenth century flown? If philoſophers, fearing to offend their readers, ſcarcely dare ſuffer truth to appear, it muſt be owned that the author of the Syſtem of Nature has broken windows with an exceſs of impudence. The book has done much miſchief, and has rendered philoſophy odious, by certain conſequences which may be drawn from its principles. Perhaps

* This is jocularly ſaid, ſuppoſing M. de Voltaire the head of an order of monks. T.

mildneſs and management are at preſent neceſſary, in order to reconcile thoſe minds to philoſophy which this author had terrified and offended.

Certain it is that leſs offence is taken at Peterſburg than at Paris; and that truth is not rejected at the throne of your empreſs, as it is by the common herd of princes. My brother Henry is now at the court of the Czarina, and is unceaſing in his admiration of her eſtabliſhments, and the care ſhe takes to poliſh, educate, and enlighten her ſubjects.

I know not what your engineers without genius have done, at the Dardanelles; perhaps they are the cauſe of the baniſhment of Choiſeul. Cardinal de Fleuri excepted, Choiſeul has been longer in office than any other of the miniſters of Lewis XV. When he was ambaſſador at Rome, Benedict XIV. defined him to be—a madman, with much underſtanding. The parliaments, and the nobility, are ſaid to regret him; and to compare him to Richelieu. His enemies, on the contrary, affirm he was the firebrand which would have ſet Europe in flames. For my part, I ſuffer each man to reaſon as he pleaſes. Choiſeul was unable to do me good or harm; I never knew him, and I entirely rely on the great ſagacity of your monarch,

narch, in the choice and diſmiſſion of his miniſters and his miſtreſſes. I concern myſelf only with my own buſineſs, and with our Chriſtmas carouſals, which ſtill continue.

We have a good opera; but, one ſolitary actreſs excepted, a bad ſet of comedians. Your Gallic actors all devote themſelves to the comic opera; and nonſenſe, ſet to muſic, is ſung by voices that ſhout and ſcream ſo as to give their hearers convulſions. During the beſt times of the age of Louis XIV. the comic opera could not ſucceed: in the preſent trifling times, in which genius is as uncommon as good ſenſe, it is admired. But mediocrity, of every kind, now forebodes an expanſion of bad taſte, which will probably again plunge Europe into a ſpecies of barbarity, from which it has been relieved by a multitude of great men.

While we ſhall preſerve Voltaire, there is nothing to fear. He is the Atlas, who, by his ſingle force, ſupports the ruinous edifice. His tomb will be the grave of good taſte and literature. Live, therefore; live, and if poſſible grow young. Such are the prayers of every man who intereſts himſelf in the belles lettres; and of me in particular.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXLI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, February 15, 1771.

WHILE you kindly beſtow praiſe upon me which is ſo legally my due, relative to my orthodoxy and my tender love for the Catholic, Apoſtolic, and holy Roman religion, I am very fearful leſt my ardent zeal ſhould not meet like approbation from the principal members of our infallible Sanhedrim. They pretend that I fall upon my knees to them, only to deal ſide blows at them as I riſe; and that I render them ridiculous with all poſſible reſpect. In vain would I cite the fine Preface of a great man, which is placed before the very edificatory Hiſtory of the Church; they will not acknowledge this to be a proper excuſe. They affirm that what may be very good in the conqueror of Roſbach and Liſſa, is intolerable in a poor devil who has only a cottage between a lake and a mountain; and that were I on the hill of Tabor, clothed in white, I never ſhould be able to ſtrip them of the purple in which they are wrapped. We are well acquainted, ſay they, both with your ill opinion and vile pleaſantry.

You

You are not ſatisfied with being the ſervant of a heretic, you have lately attached yourſelf to a ſchiſmatic; and, if you are to be believed, the power of the Pope, and that of the Great Turk, will ſoon be confined within very narrow limits.

You have no belief in miracles; yet know miracles are wrought by us. What is it leſs than miraculous to have induced, as we have done, your heretical hero to protect the Jeſuits?

It is ſtill a greater miracle that our Nuncio, in Poland, has prevailed on the Mahometans to make war on the Chriſtian empire of Ruſſia. This Nuncio, in caſe of need, could have beſtowed benediction on the ſtandard of the great prophet, Mahomet. It is not our fault that the Turks have been continually beaten; for we have continually prayed to God for their ſucceſs.

In deſpite of all your quirks and quibbles, we ſhall ſoon recover Avignon; we ſhall ſoon re-enter Benevento, and ſtill ſhall have a moſt royal patrimony; that we may reſemble Jeſus Chriſt, our Saviour, who knew not where to reſt his head. Endeavour to recover your ſenſes, for you dote; and accept our malediction, ſealed with the fiſherman's ring.

You ſee, ſire, how they treat me; while I have not a word to anſwer. Should I be ex-

communicated, I will appeal to my hero; to Julian, to Marcus Aurelius, his predeceſſors; and hope that their Roman, or their Pruſſian, eagles, which is the ſame thing, will ſhield me with their wings. I put myſelf under their protection, in this world, till the hour ſhall come when I am to be damned in the next.

I have ſent a ſmall packet to the prince royal, which I know not whether he may have received.

I throw myſelf at the feet of my hero, with equal reſpect and attachment.

The old Valetudinarian of Mount Jura.

LETTER CCCXLII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, March 1, 1771.

IT is not juſt that I ſhould cite you as one of our great authors, without ſubjecting the work to your inſpection, in which I have taken this liberty. I therefore remit to your majeſty an epiſtle againſt Muſtapha. I am unabating in my bile againſt Muſtapha and Freron. The one is an infidel; and, by abuſing him, I am certain to work out my own ſalvation. The

other, being a fool and a bad writer, by full and legal right is fair game.

In my opinion, nothing has happened ſo aſtoniſhing ſince the adventures of Roſbach and Liſſa, as to ſee my empreſs ſend from the diſtant north four fleets to the Dardanelles. Had Hannibal heard of ſuch an enterprize, he would have eſteemed his march over the Alps as a very trifle.

I ſhall for ever hate the Turks, the oppreſſors of Greece; though it is not long ſince they ſent for watches from my colony *. What ſtupid barbarians! They have continued to receive watches from Geneva theſe ſixty years, yet have never learnt the art of making them. They even do not know how to regulate a watch!

I continue to be ſorry that your majeſty, the emperor, and the Venetians, have not come to a right underſtanding with my empreſs, to drive theſe vile Turks out of Europe. It would have been the affair of a campaign, and you might equally have divided the ſpoils. It is an axiom in mathematics, that, adding equal things to equal things, the reſult will always be equal. You would therefore have remained

* The making of watches was a principal branch of manufacture among the people who lived on the manor of Voltaire, at Ferney. T.

preciſely in the ſituation in which you now are.

I perſiſt in believing that this would have been a more rational war than the war of 1756, which wanted common ſenſe. But here I quit my politics, which are as fooliſh as was this war, to inform your majeſty that, after Eaſter, I hope to pay my court, at my hermitage, to your nephews, the princes of Sweden, with whom all Paris is enraptured.

They are much more ſpoken of than the parliament. Two amiable princes will always produce a greater effect than a hundred and eighty pedants, in black gowns.

I am informed that D'Argens is dead, and am very ſorry to hear the news. Notwithſtanding his loquacity, he was an infidel of great ſervice to the good cauſe.

A-propos of the good cauſe: I once more throw myſelf at your feet for protection. Perhaps I ſhall be reproached with not being more attached to Ganganelli than to Muſtapha; to which I ſhall anſwer that I am attached to Frederic the great, and to Catharine the ſurpriſing.

Deign, ſire, to continue your kindneſs, during the time which ſtill remains for me to write vile verſes, in this excellent world.

The old Hermit of the Alps.

LET-

LETTER CCCXLIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 28, 1771.

I HAVE had the pleaſure to receive both your letters; but the apparition of the king of Sweden, at Berlin, has prevented me from anſwering you ſooner.

I ſuſpected this fine teſtament (or will) was not yours. You have received the ſame honour which was done to cardinal de Richelieu, cardinal Alberoni, marſhal Belleiſle, &c. that of being a fictitious teſtator. I ſaid to ſome one, who mentioned this teſtament to me, that it was a work of darkneſs; that neither your ſtyle was there cognizable, nor that decorum which you preſerve, in ſo ſuperior a manner, when you write for the public. Many people, however, whoſe judgments were not ſufficiently penetrating, have been deceived; and I think it will not be amiſs to ſhew them their error.

I have ſeen this king of Sweden, who is a very well informed prince, affable and mild in his manners, and exceedingly amiable in ſociety. He would have been charmed, no doubt,

had he received your verſes. I ſaw with pleaſure that you had not forgotten me.

The king of Sweden has ſpoken much of the new regulations which are making in France; of the reformation of the old, and of the creation of a new, parliament. For my part, having ſufficient to do in minding my own affairs, I only take a comprehenſive glance of what is tranſacting elſewhere. I cannot judge of foreign proceedings, except with circumſpection; becauſe, before we are able to decide, we muſt be well acquainted with the ſubject.

The chancellor is ſaid to be a man of genius, and diſtinguiſhed merit; whence I conclude he has taken the moſt juſt meaſures, in the preſent ſituation of things, ſo as to arrange them in the moſt advantageous and uſeful manner, for the good of the ſtate. But, let what will be done in France, the Gauls exclaim, criticiſe, complain, and comfort themſelves by ſome malignant ſong, or ſarcaſtic epigram. When cardinal Mazarin, during his adminiſtration, made any new encroachment, he aſked whether canzonettes were ſung at Paris. If he were anſwered in the affirmative, he was ſatisfied and at eaſe.

It is thus almoſt every where; few men reaſon, all pronounce ſentence.

We have had a number of foreigners here within

within a ſhort period. Alexis Orlow, on his return from Peterſburg, has paſſed through Berlin, to repair to his fleet at Leghorn. He has given me a piece which is curious enough, and which I ſend you. I know not how he procured it, but its contents are ſingular, and perhaps will amuſe you.

With reſpect to war, good Mr. Voltaire, that is not the thing in queſtion. I have been regenerated by the gentlemen encyclopediſts: they have exclaimed ſo loudly againſt mercenary executioners, who change Europe to a theatre of blood, that I ſhall beware in future how I incur their cenſures. I know not whether the court of Vienna may fear, as much as I reſpect them; but I am led to believe that ſhe will be very deliberate in her proceedings.

What appears to us moſt probable, in politics, is often the leaſt ſo: we are like the blind, who can but grope their road. Nor are we ſo adroit as the *Quinze-vingt* *, who know without miſtake the ſtreets and croſſings of Paris. What is called the conjectural art is no ſuch thing; it is a game at hazard, in which the moſt able are as liable to loſe as the moſt ignorant. After the departure of count Orlow, an Auſtrian count made his appearance, who, when

* A ſociety of the blind ſo called. T.

I went

I went to meet the emperor, in Moravia, feaſted me in the moſt gallant manner. The verſes which I ſend you took birth from theſe banquets, in which they are deſcribed with truth. I have not neglected to ſketch the character of count Hoditz, who is there painted after nature.

Your empreſs has feaſted my brother Henry in the moſt ſplendid manner. I imagine what ſhe has done of this kind cannot be ſurpaſſed. The road for four German miles was illuminated; there were fire-works which, according to the deſcription I have heard of them, exceeded every thing with which we are acquainted; and there were balls at which three thouſand perſons aſſembled. The affability and the grace, of which your ſovereign was ſo liberal, by way of ſauce to all theſe feſtivals, have greatly heightened their magnificence.

The only feſtivals that ſuit men of my age are thoſe to be found in good books. You, the grand fabricator of theſe, continue ſtill to impart ſerenity to my declining day; you therefore muſt not be aſtoniſhed that I am ſo much intereſted in the preſervation of the patriarch of Ferney, to whom be honour and glory from age to age.

So be it.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXLIV.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 16, 1771.

I SHOULD long ſince have anſwered you, had I not been prevented by the return of my brother Henry from Ruſſia. Full of all he has beheld worthy of admiration, he inceſſantly talks to me on the ſubject. He has ſeen your ſovereign, has been able to applaud thoſe qualities which render her ſo worthy of the throne on which ſhe is ſeated, and of thoſe ſocial gifts which are ſo rarely allied with the pomp and ſplendour of monarchs.

The curioſity of my brother carried him to Moſcow, and he every where met with thoſe grand eſtabliſhments in which the beneficent genius of the empreſs is manifeſted. I will not enter into particulars, for the ſubject is too immenſe, and requires a more experienced pen than mine. Thus much to excuſe my tardineſs; I now come to your letters.

Obſerve the difference between us: I, an abortive child of philoſophy, when my imagination is heated, can produce nothing but dreams. You, high prieſt to Apollo, are full of

of the god himſelf. You he inſpired with that divine enthuſiaſm by which we are delighted and enraptured. I ſhall therefore beware how I wreſtle with you; I fear an accident ſimilar to that which befel one Jacob, who, having entered the liſts with an angel, had one of his hips diſlocated.

I come to your encyclopedic queſtions, and confeſs that an author who writes for the public cannot reſpect the public too much, even in their foibles. The author of the Preface to Fleuri abridged meets not my approbation; he expreſſes himſelf too daringly, and advances propoſitions ſuch as may ſhock the pious ſoul, in which he is to blame. Error is filtered away, and ſeparated from truth, by the force only of reflection and of reaſoning. Few perſons will beſtow time ſufficient for ſo painful an examination, and which demands attention ſo continual. Be their errors expoſed with what perſpicacity they may, they imagine it is but a ſnare; and, while they abhor the truths that are laid before them, they deteſt the author by whom they are announced.

I therefore very much approve the method of filliping the noſe of the *infamous* —— while ſaying the civileſt of all poſſible things.

I here ſend you a hiſtory, with which the protector

tector of the capuchins may regale his holy and ſtinking flock.

The Ruſſians thought proper to beſiege the ſmall fort of Czenſtochow, defended by the Confederates. In this fort, as you know, an image of the holy and immaculate queen of heaven was kept. In their diſtreſs, the Confederates addreſſed themſelves to her, imploring her divine aid: the virgin gave them a nod with her head, and bade them truſt in her. The Ruſſians had prepared for the aſſault, and had provided themſelves with long ladders, on which they were to mount, by night, to ſcale this trifling fort. The Virgin perceiving them, called her ſon, and ſaid to him—"My ſon, "recollect what was thy firſt trade; it is now "time to exerciſe thy art, and to ſave theſe "orthodox Confederates."

The little Jeſus provides himſelf with a ſaw, departs with his mother, and, while the Ruſſians were advancing, very ſlily ſaws aſunder ſome of the ſteps of their ladders. This done, he laughing took his flight through the air, with his mother, back to Czenſtochow; and both of them again very gravely ſtuck themſelves up in their niche.

The Ruſſians however placed their ladders againſt the baſtions; but they never could reach the

the top of the wall, becauſe the ladders were ſo much ſhortened; conſequently the ſchiſmatics were obliged to retire, and the orthodox loudly chaunted *Te Deum*.

Since this miracle, the wardrobe of our holy mother, and her cabinet of curioſities, have been wonderfully augmented, by the treaſures which are brought thither, and which the zeal of the pious tranſmits in abundance.

I hope your capuchins will make holiday, when they hear of this moſt excellent miracle; and that they will not fail to add it to thoſe of the legend, which has not for many a day been ſo excellently recruited.

Poor Iſaac is gone, in ſearch of his father Abraham, to Paradiſe. His brother, at Eguille, who is a bigot, had lightened him for the journey; and the *infamous* —— erects trophies.

May trophies long be erected to you! Your body may be aged, but your mind remains youthful; and this mind will keep the machine in motion. That it may, is my wiſh, for the intereſt of princes, of reaſon, and for my own gratification.

On which I pay the great god of phyſic, your protector, the divine Apollo, to take you into his holy keeping.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXLV.

From the King.

March 19, 1771.

THY courſe with grace how ſportive doſt thou run!
Thy ſetting beams ſurpaſs thy morning ſun.
Injurious age is like a killing froſt,
In which the beauties of the year are loſt:
But age itſelf revives to hear thy voice;
While fools lament, and wit and truth rejoice.

This little compliment is your due; or rather I have mentioned a miracle which aſtoniſhes Europe. That Voltaire, loaded with days and years, preſerves more fire, pleaſantry, and genius, than all the crowd of young poets with whom your country abounds, is a problem on record, which poſterity will find great difficulty to ſolve.

Your empreſs no doubt will be flattered by the epiſtle which you have addreſſed to her. Certain it is that you have ſtated truths; but every one has not the gift of ſtating them with equal grace. I was very much ſurpriſed to ſee myſelf mentioned in your verſes. I moſt aſſuredly do not preſume to rank myſelf among grave authors. My vanity pays its reſpects to you; I ſhall maintain a good opinion of my rhapſodies, while

I behold them placed among thoſe medals of high price, which you with ſkill ſo ſuperior ſtrike.

I now come to this Muſtapha, for whom I have no unreaſonable affection. I do not oppoſe the pretenſions which you may form on his ſeraglio. I even believe that, Conſtantinople once taken, your empreſs will have the gallantry to tranſport the harem of Stamboul to Ferney, for your recreation. It appears to me, however, that it would be more worthy of my dear ally to give peace to Europe, than to kindle a general conflagration. Should this peace be accompliſhed, Muſtapha no doubt muſt pay the piper, and Greece muſt do the beſt it can.

It is whiſpered that France has excited theſe troubles; and the imprudent march of the Ottomans up the hill, in order to march down again, is imputed to the intrigues of a miniſter in diſgrace; a man of genius, but of a reſtleſs ſpirit; who imagined that, by dividing and diſturbing Europe, he might longer have maintained the tranquillity of France. You, who are the friend of this miniſter, know how much of this deſerves credit.

Rumour ſays that you will reſtore Avignon to the vice-deity of the ſeven hills. Such a mark of generoſity is uncommon among kings.

Ganga-

Ganganelli will laugh under his hood, and will mutter to himſelf——"The gates of hell ſhall "not prevail againſt me."——And this to happen too in the philoſophic age! In the eighteenth century!

After all, good gentlemen philoſophers, exert your whole force, combat with error, heap argument on argument, to deſtroy the *infamous* ——; yet will you never render the number of the feeble minded inferior to that of the ſtrong. Drive prejudice out at the door, it will fly in at the window. A bigot at the head of a kingdom, or an ambitious man whoſe intereſt is connected with that of the church, will overturn, in a ſingle day, all which your labours have with difficulty effected in twenty years.

How do I trifle! I anſwer the youthful Voltaire with all the garrulity of age! While he is jocular, I reaſon; when he laughs, I diſſertate! Bouhours no doubt was right: I and my dear countrymen only have that unpoliſhed good ſenſe which trots the ſtreets *.

My ruſh-light is going out; and that glimmering of fancy, of which I had but a feeble doſe, forſakes me. Mirth takes its flight, and

* *Qui trotte par les rues*—Proverbial. T.

my vivacity is vaniſhed. May you long preſerve yours! May you, like the good ſaint Olar, write poetry at the age of a hundred, and may I read it! Such is the prayer I put up to Apollo, in your behalf.

The princes of Sweden will not viſit Ferney. The eldeſt is become a king, and is in haſte to ſeat himſelf on the throne which the death of his father has left vacant.

Poor D'Argens has ceaſed to ſpeak, to write, and to think. He is my harbinger, and is gone before to prepare me a lodging, in the land of dreams; where we probably ſhall all meet.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXLVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, April 5, 1771.

IT has been affirmed that I have recovered my youth; but it has not yet been affirmed that I am in my ſecond childhood. My relations would certainly take out an interdiction, and declare me incapable of making my will, had I made the ridiculous teſtament which is attributed to me. Your majeſty's good taſte has

has not been miſtaken; you very well perceived it was impoſſible for a man of my age to ſpeak thus of himſelf. This impertinent performance is written by an advocate of Paris, named Marchand, who monthly regales the public with ſome work of a like kind.

I ſhall certainly not leave him any legacy, in my real teſtament: he may depend on not being rewarded for his trouble by me. Your majeſty may be aſſured that my laſt intentions are abſolutely different from thoſe that have here been ſuppoſed mine. I have no fear of death, who approaches me with haſty ſtrides, and who has already robbed me of my teeth, my eyes, and my ears. But I have an invincible averſion to the manner in which men die, in our holy Roman apoſtolic and catholic faith. It appears to me extremely ridiculous to be oiled, before we can undertake our journey to the other world; like as coach wheels are greaſed for travelling. This nonſenſe, and all that follows, offends me ſo much, that I am tempted to have myſelf carried to Neufchatel, that I may enjoy the pleaſure of dying in your dominions: to have lived in them would have been a more delectable pleaſure.

I have juſt received a letter with which I have been honoured by the prince royal. He thinks rationally, and appears to be very worthy of

being your nephew. Never before was there ſo much underſtanding in the north, from the ſixty-firſt to the fifty-ſecond degree and a half. The Poliſh Confederates ſeem to me to be the only northern people liable to reproach, for making uſe, to their own misfortune, of the kind of underſtanding they poſſeſs.

Report ſays Ali Bey was a man of much mind, and of more ambition. There are bad rumours, at preſent, reſpecting his perſon.

As to your friend, the north ſtar, ſhe nightly acquires additional ſplendour. There is no ſtar, except yours, the brightneſs of which is not effaced when ſhe ſhines. With reſpect to the creſcent of Muſtapha, I think it more clouded than ever.

I throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet, with the moſt profound reſpect.

I have this moment received your majeſty's letter of the 19th of March.——Yes, you are no doubt a grave, nay moſt grave author, although you have a glowing imagination.

I wiſh for peace, provided my princeſs would reſtore the ladies of the ſeraglio to freedom, and would give feſtivals on the Boſphorus. I do not put in any claims to the inhabitants of the harem of Muſtapha; they are the right of his brave warriors. A rendezvous with D'Argens is much

more probable, than between me and the laſſes of the ſeraglio of the Great Turk.

You call D'Argens your harbinger, but he has ſet off a little too ſoon: you will not live ſo long as your own glory; but I am very certain that your ardour, in which life conſiſts, and your regimen, which is the eſſence of all phyſic, will one day make you the father of the kings of this world, after having been their model.

It may well happen that Avignon may be reſtored to Ganganelli; though it will be exceedingly ridiculous, ſhould this charming little diſtrict be diſmembered from Provence. But we muſt act like good Chriſtians! The county of Avignon is aſſuredly of more value than Corſica; the acquiſition of which is not equal to the expence.

LETTER CCCXLVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, April 12, 1771.

IT would neither be polite nor reſpectful to write to your nephew, the king of Sweden, and to ſpeak of the king his uncle, without at leaſt communicating the liberty that has been

taken to your majeſty. I cited you, to the empreſs of Ruſſia, as a grave author; to the king of Sweden I cite you as my protector.

Whoever is at preſent in France ought to regret not being at Sans-Souci. We have nothing but treachery, diſcord, little glory, and no money. The reſources of the kingdom however are good; nay ſo good that, after the trouble which has been taken to ruin them, the thing has not been effected. France is a patient whoſe conſtitution is ſo excellent, that it has reſiſted the preſcriptions of thirty empirics. Your majeſty has proved that one good phyſician is enough.

I know not whether I may not happen to conjecture what your majeſty will this year perform; but God, who has denied me the gift of prophecy, allows me not to divine what will be the acts of the emperor. I know people who, in his place, would puſh forward beyond Belgrade, and who would round off their poſſeſſions; recollecting that, in philoſophy, the circular figure is the moſt perfect.

But I fear leſt I ſhould be guilty of follies too glaring, and will forbear. Suffer me to throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet, buried as I am in ſnow; in which I am as blind, though not as bigotted, as Milton was. I take no pleaſure in a

demoniac

demoniac whoſe whole converſation is of the Meſſiah and of the Devil. I converſe of my hero.

LETTER CCCXLVIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, June 29, 1771.

THE rhyming emperor, who reigns
O'er Manchoo hills and eaſtern plains,
In prudence me ſurpaſſes far;
For, when he mounts poetic car,
While feels the bit the foaming horſe,
To China he reſtrains his courſe.
My flippant muſe to diſtant ſtates
Her idle dreams communicates;
Away ſhe ſends the cumbrous load
Of verſe, to that divine abode
Where dwells the god of wit and taſte;
With frantic and incautious haſte
Baſe metal ſends, a plenteous ſtore,
To realms that yield the pureſt ore.

But this drop of water brings uſurious intereſt; a letter written by you, and a volume of encyclopedic queſtions. Were the people informed of ſuch literary barter, they would ſay I threw out a raſher of bacon to catch a ham: and, though

though the ſimile be trivial, they would ſay rightly.

We hear little mention made of the pope, in this country. I ſuppoſe him perpetually in conference with cardinal de Bernis, that they may come to an agreement concerning theſe good father jeſuits. As an aſſociate of the order, I ſhould ſuffer a bankruptcy of prayers, ſhould Rome have the cruelty to ſuppreſs them.

We hear as little of Turkey; nor do I know in what the mighty Sultan is at preſent employed, but I would venture a wager that it is in nothing very remarkable. The Porte however, after many remonſtrances, has juſt releaſed the Ruſſian ambaſſador, Obreſkow, who had been impriſoned contrary to the rights of nations, of which this barbarous power has no knowledge. This is a ſtep toward peace, which is likely to be concluded to the utmoſt advantage, and the great glory of your empreſs.

I congratulate you on the choice of the new miniſter made by the Moſt Chriſtian. He is ſaid to be a man of underſtanding, in which caſe you will in him find an avowed protector; and, ſhould he be ſuch, he will neither be ſo feeble nor ſo much an idiot as to reſtore Avignon to the Pope. A man may be a very good catholic, and yet ſtrip the vicar of God of his temporal poſſeſſions,

poſſeſſions, which do but diſturb his ſpiritual duties, and which often endanger the ſalvation of his ſoul. However fruitful this age may be in intrepid philoſophers who are active and ardent in the diſplay of truth, you muſt not be aſtoniſhed at the ſuperſtition of which you complain in Swiſſerland; its roots extend over the whole earth. Fanaticiſm is the daughter of timidity, weakneſs, and of ignorance *. This trinity rules as imperiouſly, over vulgar ſouls, as another trinity reigns in the ſchools of divinity.

How many contradictions are united in the human mind! The old prince of Anhalt Deſſau, whom you have ſeen, did not believe in God: but when going to hunt he would turn back, did he happen to meet three old women, for this was an ill omen. He would undertake nothing on a Monday, becauſe it was an unlucky day. If you aſked him the reaſon, that was more than he knew. You know what is related of Hobbes: an infidel by day, he could not ſleep alone at night, from the fear of ghoſts.

Let but any knave form a plan to deceive men, and he will never be in want of dupes.

* It is difficult to ſay whether this daughter had two fathers or two mothers. What follows will ſhew I could not correct the overſight. T.

Man

Man is made for error; it enters his mind involuntarily; whereas only a few truths are diſcovered by immenſe labours.

Do you, who are the apoſtle of truth, accept homage from that ſmall corner of my mind which is cleanſed from ſuperſtitious ruſt, and reſtore my half-blind companions to ſight. As for the totally blind, they muſt be ſent to their own hoſpital. Enlighten that which may be enlightened. You ſow in barren land; but this land, in future ages, will thus be rendered fruitful.

The philoſopher of Sans-Souci ſalutes the hermit of Ferney.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXLIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, Auguſt 21, 1771.

YOUR majeſty will laugh at my requeſt, and will tell me I dote. I aſk the place of a counſellor of ſtate; not for myſelf, as you may well imagine, for I do not give counſel to kings, except perhaps to the emperor of China. I imagine however that M. Lentulus will ſupport my

my requeſt. The place is for a Banneret, or Banderet *, of your principality of Neufchatel, whoſe name is Oſtervald, and who is perſecuted by the prieſts. He has long ſerved your majeſty; and, as I believe, is excommunicated.

Theſe, according to my judgment, are two potent reaſons why he ſhould be made a counſellor of ſtate. He is a man of mild manners, of a conciliatory and prudent temper, and at the ſame time an intrepid philoſopher, capable of rendering ſervice to reaſon and to you, and equally attached to both. He is a man of the preſent age, and the good folks of Neufchatel are now in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The clerical horde of this country, not ſatisfied with having condemned Petitpierre, becauſe he did not believe in the eternity of hell torments, have condemned the Banderet Oſtervald for having denied the total exiſtence of hell. The ſilly fellows knew not what was the opinion of Cicero and of Cæſar. You, who have the eloquence of the one and the generalſhip of the other, may, if ſo you pleaſe, mortify the ſacerdotal crew, by new dreſſing your Banderet in the garb of a counſellor of ſtate in Neufchatel.

I pledge my word that my other hero, the great Julian, would have granted this favour.

* A term of the feudal laws; a leader of vaſſals. T.

I aſk,

I aſk pardon for my temerity; but, ſince this Banderet Oſtervald is menaced by the conſiſtory with damnation in the other world, ought we not to requeſt ſome trifling pleaſures for him in the preſent? Having conceived this idea, I lay it at your feet. I think the Banderet with great reaſon affirms there is no hell now, ſince Jeſus Chriſt has redeemed us from all our ſins.

I am told that my dear Ruſſians have been beaten by the Turks. The news inſpires deſpair, and I entreat your majeſty to grant me conſolation.

LETTER CCCL.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 16, 1771.

A MAN who has long inſtructed the world, by his works, may be regarded as the preceptor of the human race. He may conſequently counſel all kings on earth; thoſe excepted who are unable to follow his advice. In what relates to Neufchatel, I am one of theſe; for my authority there reſembles that which a king of Sweden exerciſes over his diets, or that of Staniſlaus over his Sarmatian anarchy. To

appoint a counſellor of ſtate at Neufchatel, without the approbation of the ſynod, would be to expoſe my inefficient power to no purpoſe.

I wiſhed to protect *Jean-Jacques* in this country, and they drove him away. I demanded that your Petitpierre might not be perſecuted, but my requeſt was not granted.

I am therefore reduced to confeſs, humiliating as it may be, the extent of my impotence. I have not had recourſe in Neufchatel to the remedy employed by the court of France, to teach the parliaments of the kingdom obedience to its will. I reſpect ſtipulations, on which a people found their freedom and their immunities; and I keep within the limits of that power which they themſelves preſcribed, when they put themſelves under the protection of my houſe. But this furniſhes me with matter for philoſophic reflections.

Be kind enough to remark how determinate is the idea annexed to the word liberty, in reſpect to politics; and how confuſed it has been rendered by metaphyſicians. Liberty therefore neceſſarily exiſts. For how can a clear idea be obtained of a thing which has no exiſtence? By this word I underſtand the power to do, or not to do, ſuch or ſuch an action according to my will: liberty is conſequently a reality, not

without

without a mixture of innate paſſions, not pure, yet acting on certain occaſions entirely unreſtrained.

There is, no doubt, a difference between being able to appoint this ſelf-ſaid counſellor of ſtate and not being able. He who is able has that freedom; and he who cannot iſſue his brevet does not enjoy any ſuch freedom. This ſeems to me ſufficient to prove that freedom really exiſts; and that conſequently we are not automata, under the direction of blind fate.

It is this ſyſtem of predeſtination which has brought the Turkiſh empire within a hair's breadth of deſtruction: while the Turks remain like quakers with folded arms, waiting for the moment of divine impulſe, they are vanquiſhed by the Ruſſians. Nor ought the ſlight check which the detachment under prince Repnin has met with to influence the hopes of Muſtapha, ſo far as to make him imagine a trifle like this may enter into compariſon with the ſucceſſive victories which have been gained by the Ruſſians.

While theſe people fight for the poſſeſſions of this world, the Swiſs do well to wrangle for the riches of the next. Such wealth better ſupplies food for the fancy; and, not having armies ſufficient for the conqueſt of Wallachia, Moldavia,

via, or Tartary, they make wordy wars for the poſſeſſion of paradiſe and hell. Theſe are countries with which I am unacquainted, and of which Deliſle has not yet publiſhed any map. The road that is ſaid to lead to them croſſes imaginary ſpace, and none of the travellers have ever yet returned. I would adviſe you never to traverſe regions which are worſe than hyperborean lands.

A perſon who has ſeen you aſſures me that you enjoy very good health. Huſband this treaſure as long as you poſſibly can. One *I have* is of more worth than ten *thou ſhalt have*. May Venus for our ſakes preſerve the poet of the Graces, Minerva the rival of Thucydides, Urania the interpreter of Newton, and Apollo his beloved ſon, who ſurpaſſing Euripides is the equal of Virgil! Such are the wiſhes which the hermit of Sans-Souci makes, and ever will make, in behalf of the patriarch of Ferney.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, October 18, 1771.

I FIND you reſemble the ocean, the waves of which ſeem impeded on its banks by particles of ſand;* the conqueror of Roſbach, Liſſa, &c. &c. cannot ſpeak in the tone of authority to Swiſs prieſts. Since this is ſo, I leave you to imagine what poor Catholic princes can effect in oppoſition to the pope.

I know not whether your majeſty has ever ſeen a ſmall pamphlet entitled—*Les Droits des Hommes, et les Uſurpations des Papes* *. The book ſtates the uſurpations of the holy father, which are evidently proved. If you think proper, I will do myſelf the honour to ſend it to you by the poſt.

I have taken the liberty to addreſs the ſixth and ſeventh volumes of the Encyclopedic Queſtions to your majeſty. I very much fear I ſhall not be allowed to continue the work. This is a caſe in which liberty may very well be called power. He who has not the power to act certainly has not the liberty to act; he has only

* The Rights of Men, and the Uſurpations of Popes.

the

the liberty to ſay—I am the ſlave of nature. I formerly did all in my power to convince myſelf men were free; but I much ſuſpect I was in an error. To will what we will, and becauſe we will, appears to me a royal prerogative to which petty mortals ought not to pretend. But be you, ſire, as free as you pleaſe, for you are a king; honour ſo great is no inheritance of mine.

All that I certainly know is I have not the freedom to think you any thing leſs than the firſt man of the age; like as I am obliged to think Catherine II. the firſt of women; and Muſtapha a poor creature; at leaſt hitherto. He ſeems to me neither to know how to make war nor peace. I have heard of kings who have made both very ſeaſonably; but I ſhall beware how I mention theſe kings in your preſence.

The empreſs of Ruſſia ſays her affairs proſper beyond the Danube; that ſhe is miſtreſs of all Wallachia, one or two trifling fortreſſes excepted; and that ſhe is acknowledged by all the Crimea. She ought immediately to have Iphigenia in Tauris performed, at the theatre of Batchi-Sarai *. May ſhe ſoon make a glorious peace; and may theſe villainous Turks no more moleſt the Greek and Latin Chriſtians!

* Bactcheſeray.

LETTER CCCLII.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, November 18, 1771.

YOU laugh at me, my good Voltaire. I am neither a hero nor an ocean, but a man who avoids all thoſe quarrels which are the diſunion of ſociety. Rather compare me to a phyſician, who regulates his preſcription according to the conſtitution of the patient. Gentle remedies muſt be applied to fanatics; for violent doſes throw them into convulſions. This is the manner in which I treat the preachers of Geneva, who in their vehemence rather reſemble the reformers of the fifteenth century than the preſent generation.

I long ſince have read the pamphlet on the Rights of Men, and the Uſurpations of Popes. You take it for granted then that the Semnones have not the curioſity to read your works; and that they are not peruſed with as much pleaſure, and perhaps more, on the banks of the Havel as on thoſe of the Seine, or the Rhone. The pamphlet appeared immediately after the French had taken poſſeſſion of the county of Avignon. I imagined it was their manifeſto,

and

and that by miſtake they had printed it when the affair was over.

I have a thouſand obligations to you for your ſixth and ſeventh volumes of your Encyclopedie, which I have received. Were the ſtyle of Voiture ſtill in faſhion, I ſhould tell you that the father of the Muſes is the author of that work, and that its approbation had been ſigned by the God of taſte. I was very much ſurpriſed to find my own name there, which you from charity have inſerted. I have met with ſome parables in the work leſs dark than thoſe of the goſpel, and applauded myſelf for having diſcovered their meaning. The work is admirable, and I exhort you to a continuation. Were it an academical diſcourſe, ſubject to reviſion by the Sorbonne, I perhaps ſhould be of a different opinion.

Write on; ſend your works into England, Holland, Germany and Ruſſia; I will be anſwerable for their eager welcome. Let what precautions will be taken, they will find their way into France; and your Gauls will be aſhamed not to approve that which is every where elſe admired.

I had a violent fit of the gout when your books came to hand, with my feet and arms bound up, enchained and uſeleſs, and the read-

ing of them was a great relief to me. A thouſand times as I peruſed did I return thanks to heaven for having ſent you into the world.

To render you an account of my other occupations, you muſt know that I ſcarcely had recovered the uſe of my right hand before I was ſeized with the whim of ſpoiling paper; not to enlighten, not to inſtruct Europe, the eyes of which are wide open, but for my own amuſement. I have not ſung the victories of Catherine, but the follies of the Confederates. Jocularity is much better adapted to a convaleſcent man than the auſterity of the majeſtic ſtyle. I will ſend you a ſpecimen. The poem is in ſix cantos, all of which are finiſhed; for a ſickneſs of five weeks has given me time to rhyme, and to correct wholly at my eaſe. You will be ſufficiently tired by reading two cantos, which I am preparing for you.

"How incorrigible is the animal man!" Thus will you exclaim when you behold more of my rhymes. The conqueſt of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Tartary, ought to be ſung in a different key to the abſurdities of Crazinſki, Potoſki, Oginſki, and the whole of that idiot multitude, the names of whom terminate in *ſki*.

As I believe myſelf a being poſſeſſed of partial liberty, I have uſed my privilege on this occaſion;

occaſion; and, as I am, paſt redemption, an excommunicated heretic, I have defied the thunder of the Vatican. Do you defy it likewiſe, for you are in the ſame ſituation.

Recollect we ought not to bury our talent; nor does any one here accuſe you of ſo doing; but I wiſh poſterity might not be deprived of any of your thoughts. For how many ages ſhall paſs away, before a genius ſhall ariſe, who to ſo much good taſte ſhall add ſo much knowledge! I am pleading in a good cauſe, and I addreſs myſelf to a man ſo eloquent that, let him but glance over the ſubject, he will immediately conceive every argument I am able to employ.

Let him therefore continue to extend his fame, to inſtruct, to enlighten, to conſole, to laugh at, to chaſtiſe, according as the ſubject may require, the public, the enthuſiaſt, and the inſects of literature. May he enjoy unalterable health, and may he never forget the ſolitary Semnonian who reſides at Sans-Souci.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, December 6, 1771.

NEVER did I before ſo well comprehend the poſſibility of laughing and crying in the ſame day. My mind was full, and my heart affected by the horrible attempt made on the perſon of the king of Poland, who honours me with ſome ſhare of his favour. The following words, which I ſhall never forget—"You "are indeed my king, but I have taken an "oath to kill you"—drew tears of horror from me. I was weeping when I received your letter, and your moſt philoſophic poem, which relates the trueſt things poſſible in the moſt pleaſant of modes. I began to laugh in deſpite of myſelf, my fears, and my conſternation. How well do you paint the devil and his prieſts; and eſpecially that biſhop, who is the firſt author of all the evil!

I well perceive, when you compoſed theſe two firſt cantos, the infamous crime of the Confederates had not been committed. You will be obliged to be as tragic, in the laſt canto, as you have been comic, in thoſe which your ma-

jeſty

jeſty has had the goodneſs to ſend me. Misfortune is good for ſomething, ſince the gout has induced you to write a work ſo agreeable. From the time of Scarron, never have verſes ſo pleaſant been written in pain. The king of China will never be ſo pleaſant as your majeſty; and I defy Muſtapha to approach you.

Have nothing more to do with the gout, but write poetry like this often at Sans-Souci. The more merry you are the longer will you live; and this is what I paſſionately wiſh, for your own ſake, for that of my heroine, and for my unworthy ſelf.

I think that the attempt to aſſaſſinate the king of Poland will be of much ſervice to him. It is impoſſible that the Confederates, now held in horror by the human race, ſhould perſiſt in ſo criminal a faction. I may deceive myſelf, but, if I do not miſtake, the peace of Poland may take birth from this execrable act.

I am ſorry to obſerve to you that there have now been five crowned heads, on whom aſſaſſination has been attempted, within a ſhort time, in this our philoſophic age. Fortunately, though among all theſe aſſaſſins there have been perſons of the fraternity of Malagrida, we have not met with a ſingle philoſopher. Philoſophers are ſaid to be ſeditious: what then is the biſhop

of

of Kiow? Report affirms that the conſpirators made oath on an image of the bleſſed Virgin, after having taken the ſacrament. I earneſtly entreat your majeſty, ingenious and diabolic as you are, to deign to ſend me ſome true account of this ſtrange event, which cannot but open the eyes of a part of Europe. I take the liberty to recommend the abby of Oliva to your bounty.

I throw myſelf at your feet, provided they no longer have the gout, with the moſt profound reſpect, and the moſt ſtupid amazement at all I have juſt read!

LETTER CCCLIV.

From the King.

Berlin, January 12, 1772.

I ALLOW I have laid myſelf under an obligation to give you an account of the Confederates, whom I have ſung: like as you were obliged to give the world anecdotes of the League, in order to afford it all neceſſary information concerning the Henriade.

Know then that my Confederates, leſs valiant than your Leaguers, but not leſs fanatic, will not be found their inferiors in crimes. The

horrible attempt which has failed againſt the king of Poland happened, the taking of the ſacrament excepted, much in the manner in which it is related in the public papers. It is true that the wretch who wiſhed to aſſaſſinate the king of Poland had taken an oath ſo to do, to Pulawſki the marſhal of the Confederation, before the high altar of the Virgin at Czenſtochow. I ſend you the public papers, which perhaps have not reached Swiſſerland, in which you will find this tragic ſcene related, with all its circumſtances, exactly conformable to what my miniſter at Warſaw has noted, in his relation.

True it is my poem, if ſo you are determined to call it, was finiſhed when this act was committed; nor did I think proper to make it a part of my work, in which, from one end to the other, a tone of pleaſantry and mirth predominates. I wiſh not however to paſs this crime in ſilence; accordingly, I have juſt occaſionally mentioned it at the beginning of the fifth canto: ſo that this ſportive performance, written entirely for my amuſement, is not disfigured by a tragical interlopation, which would have been incompatible with the reſt.

It ſeems that, to turn my eyes from Poliſh phrenzy and the atrocious ſcene of Warſaw, my ſiſter, the queen of Sweden, choſe this time to come

come and viſit her family, after an abſence of twenty-eight years. We have all been re-animated by her preſence, and I have imagined it has made me ten years younger. I uſed every effort to diſſipate the regret which ſhe feels, at the loſs of a tender and beloved conſort; and to afford her every kind of amuſement, in which the arts and ſciences might have the greateſt part.

We ſpoke much of you. My ſiſter found the want of you at Berlin: I anſwered I had for thirteen years been convinced of the truth of her remark. This did not prevent us from praying for your preſervation; and we concluded, though we did not poſſeſs you, that you were very neceſſary to Europe.

Suffer Fortune, Cupid, and Plutus to wear the bandage over their eyes; but it would be a ſtrange contradiction to ſee him blinded who ſo long has been the light of Chriſtendom. Here is a vile play on words for you, for which I will make honourable amends to the god of taſte, who reſides at Ferney. I will pray him to inſpire me, and to reſt aſſured that, in the belles lettres, I believe his deciſions to be more infallible than thoſe of Ganganelli on articles of faith. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, February 1, 1772.

MY heart, though very old, is as ſenſible of your kindneſs as though it were young. Your third and fourth cantos have almoſt cured me of a diſeaſe which might be thought of a ſerious nature. So are not your verſes. I remain aſtoniſhed to think you could write any thing ſo cheerful, on ſo melancholy a ſubject. What your majeſty has ſaid of the Confederates, in your letter, inſpires indignation againſt them as effectually as your poetry inſpires mirth. I flatter myſelf that all will end here, happily for the king of Poland and for your majeſty. Should you gain no more than ſix towns, for your ſix cantos, you will not have waſted your paper and ink. The queen of Sweden will be no gainer by the Poliſh diſſenſions, but ſhe will increaſe her own and her brother's happineſs. Permit me to thank her, for the kindneſs with which you inform me ſhe has deigned to mention me; and ſuffer me to incloſe my reſpects to her in your packet.

The widow of the poor dear Iſaac * has informed me of the favours which you have heaped upon her, and of a little monument which ſhe has erected to her huſband, the panegyriſt of the emperor Julian of moſt reſpectable memory. This madam Iſaac is quite one of the virtuoſi; ſhe underſtands Greek and Latin, and writes her own tongue in an unuſual ſtyle.

Your majeſty concludes your laſt letter by ſome fine moral maxims; but you are adviſing the lame not to run too faſt. I have ſcarcely been out of my bed theſe two years. I am almoſt tempted to ſay to you as *Le Notre* did to Pope Alexander VII.—"Holy Father, give me "temptation inſtead of benediction."—Health! Health! This is the firſt, the greateſt good in every condition of life, and at every age of man.

I entreat your majeſty not to have the gout any more; at leaſt, not unleſs it ſhould be productive of ſome new poem in ſix cantos.

Accept, ſire, the profound reſpect, and the inviolable attachment, of a poor old man, who is worſe than if he had the gout.

* The marchioneſs d'Argens.

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LETTER CCCLVI.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 1, 1772.

I REALLY bluſh for the nonſenſe I ſend you; but, ſince you are in train to read, you ſhall have it of various kinds: videlicet, the fifth canto of the Confederation; an academic diſcourſe on a thread-bare ſubject, in order to introduce an eulogium on the illuſtrious auditor who was preſent at the aſſembly of the academy; and an epiſtle to my ſiſter of Sweden, relative to the vexations ſhe has encountered in that country. All are yours. She has received the letter you have addreſſed to her; but ſhe would not confide her anſwer to me, otherwiſe you would have found it incloſed in my letter.

Vexations are not met with in Sweden only; poor Babet, the widow of the defunct Iſaac, has felt them in Provence. The bigots of that country muſt be moſt terrible people. They adminiſtered the extreme unction perforce, to the good panegyriſt of the emperor Julian; they made a difficulty of interring him; and others again objected to a monument, which was wiſhed to be raiſed to his memory. Poor

Babet

Babet has ſeen one half of the houſe which her late huſband built for her ſwept away, by an inundation; and ſhe has loſt her furniture; which loſs is a conſiderable one, her fortune conſidered, which is ſmall. She learnt many things, in order to pleaſe her huſband. She does not paint amiſs, and has made herſelf reſpectable, by having conformed, as much as was in her power, to the taſte and inclinations of her huſband, and for having rendered his life agreeable. One evening, as he returned home from me, the marquis entered his wife's apartment, and aſked—"Well, haſt thou made "that child?" Some friends who were preſent began to laugh at this ſtrange queſtion; but the marchioneſs ſoon explained the true meaning of the words, by ſhewing them the portrait of a little child, which her huſband had deſired her to paint.

I have again ſuffered under a violent fit of the gout; but, wanting a ſubject, it has not produced a poem.

With reſpect to yourſelf, you muſt not wonder that I ſhould think you young. Your works do not in any degree partake of the age of their author; and I think it is in your own choice to write another Henriade.

I pray for your welfare; if my prayers are intereſted

you muſt forgive me, by remembering the pleaſure I receive from reading your works. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, March 24, 1772.

THOUGH meſſieurs Formey, Premonval, Touſſaint, and Merian, themſelves were to tell me, it is we who wrote the diſcourſe on the Utility of Arts and Sciences to a State, I ſhould anſwer them, Gentlemen, I do not believe you: I diſcover in every page the hand of a greater maſter. Thus would Trajan have written.

I know not whether the emperor of China do or do not cauſe ſome of his diſcourſes to be read in his academy; but I defy him to write better proſe: and, with reſpect to verſe, I am acquainted with a king in the north who writes in a ſtyle ſuperior to him, without taking much trouble. I defy his majeſty Kienlong, aided by all his mandarins, to be as cheerful, as eaſy, and as agreeable, as is the king of the north, whom I mention. Know that his poem on the

Confederates is infinitely ſuperior to the poem of Moukden.

You muſt have heard, gentlemen, that the abbé Chaulieu wrote very charming verſes, after his fits of the gout; but learn from me that this king has done the ſame, when the very fit was on him.

Should you aſk me who this extraordinary prince is, I ſhould inform you, gentlemen, he is a man who gives battle with as much eaſe as he gives orders for an opera. He profits by thoſe hours which other kings waſte, in following a dog that purſues a ſtag. He has written more books than any of his cotemporary princes have begotten baſtards; and he has won more victories than he has written books. Now gueſs who I mean if you can.

I ſhall add that I ſaw this phenomenon about twenty years ago; and that, had I not been a giddy fellow, I ſhould ſee him ſtill, and ſhould figure in your academy as well as the beſt of you. My dear Iſaac acted very ill when he left you, gentlemen: he has been in danger of not being buried in holy ground; which to a dead corpſe is one of the greateſt of misfortunes, and one which will happen to me without delay: whereas, had I remained among you, I might

might have died at my eaſe, and in much better humour.

When you ſhall have divined who the hero is of whom I converſe, have the kindneſs to preſent my moſt humble reſpects to him, with all the admiration with which he inſpired me in the year 1736, that is to ſay, exactly thirty-ſix years ago; and an attachment of thirty-ſix years is no trifle. God has reſerved me to be the laſt of all thoſe who forſook their country purely for his ſake. You may think yourſelves very happy that he comes to your aſſemblies; but there was another kind of happineſs formerly, that of being a gueſt at his ſuppers. I wiſh his length of life may equal his fame, were it poſſible a prayer like this could be heard.

LETTER CCCLVIII.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, April 22, 1772.

NEVER was poet found mad enough to ſend bad verſes to Boileau, from the dread of being thanked by an epigram. No one ever thought proper to importune Fontenelle, Boſſuet, or Gaſſendi with his nonſenſe: but you,

who equal theſe collectively, add indulgence to the talents which theſe great men poſſeſſed, by which your virtues are rendered more amiable. For this reaſon are you tormented by the correſpondence of all the inſects of the ſacred valley, of which I have the honour to call myſelf one. You have ſet the example of toleration to Parnaſſus, by protecting the poem of Moukden and that of the Confederates; and what is ſtill better, you ſend me the ninth volume of the Encyclopedic Queſtions, for which I return you my thanks. I have read the work with the utmoſt ſatisfaction; it is written ſo as to ſpread knowledge among the amiably ignorant, and to inſpire them with the wiſh to gain inſtruction.

I was agreeably ſurpriſed by the article on the fine arts, which you have addreſſed to me. I do not merit this diſtinction, except by the attachment which I have for them, and for all which is characteriſed by genius, which is the only ſource of true fame for the human mind.

The letters from Memmius to Cicero are a maſter-piece, in which the moſt difficult queſtions are made eaſy to every capacity. They form an extract of all which the ancients and moderns have beſt thought on the ſubject. I am ready to ſign this ſymbol of philoſophic faith. Every unprejudiced man, who ſhall well have examined

the

the matter, will be unable to think otherwiſe: you in particular are poſſeſſed of the art of advancing theſe bold truths, without involving yourſelf in a quarrel with the devout. The article on truth is likewiſe admirable. I expected to ſee a dialogue between Jeſus and Pilate: it is ſketched, and is exceedingly pleaſant.

I ſhould never end were I circumſtantially to enter into the contents of this ineſtimable volume. It would have been a pity had it not appeared, and had poſterity been deprived of it.

Your tragedy of the Pelopidæ has been ſent me from Paris, and deſerves to be ranked among the beſt of your dramatic works. The continually reviving intereſt of the piece, and the uniform elegance of the verſification, raiſes it a hundred degrees above that of Crébillon. I am aſtoniſhed that it is not played at Paris; or, rather, your modern Gauls have loſt all taſte for excellence. They are ſatiated with the perfection of art; and frivolity, at preſent, leads them to protect the comic opera, Vauxhall, and puppet ſhews. They do not deſerve you ſhould bear the name of Frenchman, and poſterity only will be fully acquainted with your merit.

For my part I have done you juſtice theſe

ſix-and-thirty years. I do not vary in my opinion at ſixty; I think the ſame reſpecting you as I did at twenty-four. I offer up prayers to that Being who animates all things, that he may deign to preſerve, as long as poſſible, the old caſe of your beautiful ſoul. Theſe are no compliments, but ſentiments the moſt ſincere, and ſuch as your works inceſſantly engrave more deeply in my mind.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

Ferney, July 31, 1772.

PERMIT me to remark to your majeſty, that you reſemble one of the characters of La Fontaine—

Droit au ſolide allait Bartholomée *.

This immediate coming to the point aſtoniſhingly accompanies true glory: you render a kingdom flouriſhing and potent, which, under the king your grandfather, was but the monarchy

* Bartholomew immediately came to the point.

of

of vanity; you have diſcerned truth of every kind, for which reaſon you are in every kind unique and ſingular. What you now are actually doing is quite equal to your poem on the Confederates. It is pleaſant to ruin and to write ſongs on nations.

It is my duty to inform your majeſty that a young man of twenty-five, a very good and well-informed officer, who has been in the ſervice ever ſince the age of twelve, and who is determined hereafter to ſerve none but you, has left Paris without ſaying a word to any one, and is coming to demand your permiſſion to have his head broken under your orders. He is of a very ancient family; a real marquis, and not one of thoſe chance marquiſes who take up their titles in an inn, and oblige the poſtilions, whom they do not pay, to call them My Lord. He is the marquis de Saint-Aulaire, the nephew of a lieutenant-general, who is one of our moſt amiable academicians, who wrote very good poetry when he was near a hundred; ſuch as you, according to my hope and belief, will write at that age. I believe my young marquis is now at Berlin, endeavouring, perhaps ineffectually, to be preſented to your majeſty; of which honour he is ſaid to be worthy, for his character is excellent.

The old valetudinarian throws himſelf at your feet, with attachment, admiration, reſpect, and remorſe *.

LETTER CCCLX.

From the King.

Sans-Souci, Auguſt 14, 1772.

I THANK you for congratulating me on the rumours which are current in the world. We muſt wait to ſee, from the turn which the affairs of Poland may take, whether theſe rumours will or will not be verified.

I have ſeen poetry much ſuperior to that with which I amuſed myſelf, when I had the gout, on ſyſtems and cabals. Theſe two poems are as vigorous, and as warmly coloured, as if you were but twenty. They have been printed at Berlin, and will make their way through all the north.

We have had many foreigners here this year;

* This letter, though almoſt a literal copy of letter CCCXIII. yet having ſome variations, and being found inſerted in both places, I have thought it right to retain, though I have no doubt that only one of them was ſent; however, I leave the reader to judge for himſelf. T.

Engliſh,

Engliſh, Dutch, Spaniards, and Italians; but not a Frenchman has ſet foot in Berlin, and I am poſitively certain the marquis de Saint-Aulaire is not here. Should he come, he ſhall be well received; eſpecially if he be not baniſhed for ſome wrong act, which ſometimes is the caſe with young Frenchmen.

I depart to-night for Sileſia; on my return, you ſhall have a longer letter, accompanied by ſome ſpecimens of porcelain, which connoiſſeurs approve, and which are manufactured at Berlin.

I wiſh your cheerfulneſs and good humour may long continue, for the honour of Parnaſſus, and for the ſatisfaction of all who read your works! *Vale,*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXI.

From the King.

September 16, 1772.

I HAVE received ſome charming verſes, written by the patriarch of Ferney, at the end of a ſhort polemic work, which defends the rights of humanity againſt the tyranny of conſcience-executioners. I am aſtoniſhed to diſcover

ver all the freſhneſs and colouring of youth in the verſes I mention. I cannot but believe your ſoul to be immortal; that it thinks without the aid of the body; and that it will continue to enlighten us, after it has quitted its habitation of clay. Immortality is a glorious privilege, which few beings in this univerſe have enjoyed. I applaud and admire you.

Not to be totally left in the rear, I ſend you the ſixth canto of the Confederates, with a medal which has been ſtruck on this ſubject; all which does not equal one of the ſtanzas you have ſent me. But roſes do not grow in every hedge, and we can only give ſuch as we have. You will perceive I have been more buſied by this ſixth canto than by political affairs, and that the people of Swiſſerland have done me too much honour, in imagining me more abſorbed in them than I am.

I wiſhed to have ſent you ſome ſpecimens of porcelain with this letter, but the workmen were not able to finiſh them ſoon enough; they will not be long before they will follow, at the riſk of all the perils of travelling.

No one of the name of Saint-Aulaire is yet arrived here. Perhaps the perſon whom you mentioned has changed his intentions.

The peace is nearly concluded in the eaſt,

and

and the pacification of Poland is in preparation. This excellent denouement is entirely due to the moderation of the empreſs of Ruſſia, who has had the prudence to ſet bounds to her conqueſts, to overawe her ſecret enemies, and to re-eſtabliſh order and tranquillity, where trouble and confuſion had reigned. I leave your muſe worthily to celebrate her acts: I do but ſtutter her eulogium; and what I have ſaid is of no worth, except as far as it is dictated by feeling.

Long may you continue in this world, in which being ſure of immortality, you ought not to be in any haſte to enjoy it in the other. At leaſt be ſo complaiſant to me, a poor mortal, who poſſeſſes nothing of the infinite, as to prolong your ſtay on this globe, that you may prolong my pleaſures; for I very much fear I ſhall not be able to find you in the next world.

Vale,

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, October 16, 1772.

THE medal is beautiful and well ſtruck, and the legend noble and ſimple. The map, which Poliſh Pruſſia preſents to its new maſter, is in particular productive of a good effect. I ſincerely thank your majeſty for this northern jewel; we have nothing at preſent equal to it, in the ſouth.

Peace well the Poles might thus adviſe—
" Beware! the Dev'l will catch a prize!
" Too long you've kept a table ſpread,
" While your voracious neighbours fed;
" Nor wonder now that they, with eaſe,
" Divide the king-cake as they pleaſe."

It is aſſuredly a royal cake, and has been divided into three parts. But is there nothing fallacious in the peace? I hear from all ſides that Catherine II. and Muſtapha are not reconciled; and that hoſtilities have been begun again within theſe two months. Report ſays that, among our talkative Frenchmen, ſome are found who are totally ſilent, but who, notwithſtanding, are clandeſtinely very active.

It

It is affirmed that the ſame people who keep Avignon ſafely, for his holineſs the Pope, have great influence in the ſeraglio of Conſtantinople. Should the thing be true, a new ſcene will ſoon open. Nothing however can be finer than the dramas which are now acted in Pruſſia, and in Sweden. The king your nephew appears to be worthy of his uncle. I thank your majeſty for reſtoring order to the celebrated convent of Oliva; for rumour aſſerts you are the prior of this good abby, and that all the noviciates of the miniſtry will very ſhortly learn the Pruſſian exerciſe. Two years ago, I did not expect any thing of what I behold. It is certainly a thing unexampled that the ſame man ſhould laugh, ſo much at his eaſe, at the Palatines, through ſix whole cantos, and yet ſhould acquire a new kingdom for his trouble. King David wrote verſes againſt his enemies, but his verſes were not ſo pleaſant as yours. Never was poem written and kingdom taken with ſo much facility.

You, ſire, are the founder of a very great monarchy. You hold one half of the balance of Europe, and Ruſſia riſes a new world. How is all changed! And how pleaſed am I with myſelf, for having lived to be a ſpectator of theſe great events!

God be thanked, I predicted and affirmed,

more than thirty years ago, you would perform very great things: yet I did not extend my predictions ſo far as you have extended your very ſtable glory. It has continually been your fate to aſtoniſh the world. I know not when you will ſtop, but I know the Pruſſian eagle towers high.

I entreat this eagle to deign to caſt on me, inſignificant as I am, from the high clouds in which he wings his way, one of thoſe glances which reanimates expiring genius. If your medal be a good likeneſs, I diſcover life in your eyes, and on your countenance. You have, as you ought to have, the head of a hero.

I am at your feet, as I have been theſe thirty years; but I am much enfeebled. I will look on the *Regno redintegrato* * when I wiſh to recover my powers.

Your old Admirer.

* The legend of the medal. T.

LETTER CCCLXIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, November 1, 1772.

YOU know that, as I never have myſelf painted, neither my portraits nor medals reſemble me. I am old; I am broken, gouty, ſuperannuated; but ſtill am gay and cheerful. Medals are rather intended to mark dates than meant to be faithful likeneſſes.

I have not only acquired an abbot but two biſhops and an army of capuchins, of whom I am extremely fond, ſince you are become their protector.

I will freely own, I think the poet who wrote the Confederates was very impertinent, when he dared to laugh at Frenchmen who had gone to Poland. But, in excuſe, he ſays he knows how to reſpect that which is reſpectable; though he thinks he may be allowed to joke with the ſcum of nations; with Frenchmen diſbanded at the peace, who, having nothing better to do, went to act as banditti in Poland, with the aſſociation of the Confederates.

I believe there are Frenchmen who keep ſilent, and who yet have great influence in the

 ſeraglio:

ſeraglio: but my intelligence from Conſtantinople tells me that the congreſs for peace is renewed, and that the negociations are now more vigorous than they before were. This leads me to believe that my knave of a poet, who pretends to be ſo clear-ſighted, is in the wrong.

I have read the fine verſes which you have written for the king of Sweden. They poſſeſs all the vivacity of thoſe of your works which appeared at the beginning of this century. *Semper idem* is your motto; but it is not a motto which every man may bear.

How can I reanimate you who are immortal? Apollo has ceded the ſceptre of Parnaſſus to you, and has abdicated in your favour. Your poetry partakes of the ſpring time of your life, and your reaſon of your autumn. Happy are thoſe who thus can combine imagination and reaſon! This is much ſuperior to the acquiſition of ſome provinces, the exiſtence of which is not perceived on the globe, and which from the celeſtial ſpheres would ſcarcely appear equal to a grain of ſand.

Such are the wretched trifles concerning which we politicians ſo ardently intereſt ourſelves. I am aſhamed of ſuch things. My excuſe is that the ſoul which enters the body muſt conform itſelf to its habitation. I knew a Jeſuit who gravely

gravely aſſured me that he would expoſe himſelf to the moſt cruel martyrdom, were he but able to convert ſo much as a monkey. This is more than I would do; but when it is poſſible to unite and join dominions that were disjointed, ſo as to form the kingdom into a whole, I know but few mortals who would not with pleaſure make the attempt. Do not forget that this affair has paſſed without effuſion of blood; and that the encyclopediſts cannot now declaim againſt mercenary banditti, and employ ſo many other fine phraſes, by the eloquence of which I was never affected. A little ink, with the aid of a pen, has done the whole, and Europe will be pacified; at leaſt as far as the late troubles are concerned.

I will anſwer nothing for the future. When I look into hiſtory, I perceive ſcarcely have ten years paſſed away without wars. Theſe are a kind of intermittent fever, which may be ſuſpended, but never can be cured. The reaſon of this muſt be ſought for in the natural reſtleſſneſs of man. If one do not excite troubles another will; and a ſpark often occaſions a general conflagration.

Here are arguments in plenty for you; but I ſend you the product of my country. You Frenchmen have imagination, the Engliſh are

ſaid to poſſeſs depth, and we Germans ſlowneſs, with that ſound common ſenſe which is in no eſteem. Let your imagination receive this loquacity with indulgence; and permit my heavy reaſon to admire the phenix of France, the lord of Ferney; and to pray for that ſame Voltaire whom I formerly poſſeſſed, and whoſe loſs I daily regret, becauſe it is irreparable.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, November 13, 1772.

YESTERDAY a royal cheſt arrived at my hermitage; and this morning I drank my coffee in a cup ſuch as is not made in the dominions of your brother Kienlong, the emperor of China. The tea ſet is of perfect beauty. I well knew that Frederic the Great was a better poet than the good Kienlong; but I knew not that he amuſed himſelf in cauſing porcelain to be fabriçated at Berlin, which is much ſuperior to that of Kiengtſin, that of Dreſden, or that made at Sêve. It is decreed that this aſtoniſh-

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ing man ſhall eclipſe all his rivals, in whatever he undertakes.

I will nevertheleſs own that, among the perſons who were my viſitors when the cheſt was opened, there were ſome critics who did not approve the laurel crown which ſurrounds the lyre of Apollo, on the admirable cover of one of the prettieſt baſons in the world. They aſked how it could happen that a great man, who is ſo well known for the contempt with which he treats pomp, and falſe fame, ſhould conceive the deſign of placing his arms on the top of a baſon. I replied, this muſt certainly be a whim of the workman; and that kings leave every thing to the caprice of the artiſt. Louis XIV. did not command that ſlaves ſhould be put at the foot of his ſtatue; he did not require M. de la Feuillade to cauſe the famous inſcription, "To the immortal man," to be engraven. And though with the ſtricteſt truth *Frederico Immortali* might be read in a hundred places, it may well be ſuppoſed Frederic the Great never imagined this motto for himſelf, but left it to the imagination of others.

There is alſo an Amphion, borne by a dolphin. I well know that a dolphin of old, a lover of poetry no doubt, ſaved Amphion from the

waves, in which thoſe who envied wiſhed to drown him.

In fine, the arts at preſent all flouriſh in the north. There the fineſt porcelain baſons are made; provinces are there divided by a daſh of the pen; confederations and ſenates are there annihilated in two days; and there do men laugh, with infinite humour, at the Confederates, and at the Holy Virgin.

Nor are we Gauls without our merit. We have comic operas, which we prefer to Molière; we have puppet ſhows, that ſupplant Racine; we have financiers of more ſagacity than Colbert; and we have generals ſuch as Turenne never equalled.

What vexes me is that, it is affirmed, you have occaſioned the conferences, between Muſtapha and my empreſs, to be renewed. Iſhould have been better pleaſed had you aided her, in driving theſe vile Turks from the Boſphorus; enemies as they are of the fine arts, and extinguiſhers of the genius of Greece. You may ſtill however amuſe yourſelf, in your progreſs, by taking ſome provinces, to render your kingdom *more a whole*. For, in fine, amuſement is neceſſary; and continually to read, philoſophiſe, and write poetry and muſic, is not ſufficient.

I throw

I throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet, with all the reſpect and admiration which you inſpire.

The old Valetudinarian of Ferney.

LETTER CCCLXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

Ferney, November 18, 1772.

BLEST Italy was firſt, you own,
Genius to ſeat upon her throne;
Of wit and fame France had her age,
And England many a godlike ſage.
Though not unapt, yet rather ſlow
The Germans are, you think; yet know
To them two wondrous arts we owe:
On this contemn'd Teutonic earth
Printing and gunn'ry firſt took birth.
By you adorn'd, by you admir'd,
High fame from both have you acquir'd.

To this let me add that Copernicus diſcovered the true ſyſtem of the earth at Thorn; that the aſtronomer Hevelius (or Hevelke) was a native of Dantzic; and that conſequently Thorn and Dantzic ought to be yours. Your majeſty will have the generoſity to ſend us corn down the Viſtula, when, by the aid of writing on œconomy, inſtead of bread we ſhall have no-

thing but comic operas; which accident has befallen us of late years.

It is becauſe the Turks have very good corn, and have not any of the fine arts, that I wiſh to ſee you divide Turkey with your two aſſociates. This perhaps would not be very difficult to effect; and it would be a tolerable fine ending of your ſplendid career: for, Swiſs though I am, I have no wiſh that you ſhould take France.

Report affirms that it was you, ſire, who imagined the Poliſh partition; and I believe report, becauſe there was genius in the thought, and becauſe the treaty was concluded at Potſdam.

All Europe pretends that the great *Gregory* is on ill terms with my empreſs. I could wiſh this were only in ſport; I am not fond of quarrels. Not but, ſince I find I muſt end my days far from Berlin, where I wiſhed to die, I can imagine the poſſibility of depriving one's ſelf of the object of an ardent paſſion.

What your majeſty has deigned to ſay to me, at the end of your letter, almoſt drew tears from me. I am what I was, when you permitted me to paſs ſuch delicious hours at your ſuppers, and liſten to the model of heroes, and of good company. The laſt ſenſation of my life will be regret. Conſole by your kindneſs a heart that

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at this diſtance ſympathizes with yours, and which aſſuredly is faithful to you.

The old Valetudinarian.

LETTER CCCLXVI.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 4, 1772.

HAVING received your letter, I immediately ſent for the director of the porcelain manufactory, and demanded to know what the Amphion ſignified, together with the lyre and the laurel with which he had adorned a certain baſon ſent to Ferney. His anſwer was that his artiſts could not do leſs, in order to render the china worthy of him for whom it was deſtined; that he was not ſo ignorant as not to have heard of the laurel deſtined for Taſſo, to bind his brows at the Capitol; that the lyre was made in imitation of that by which the Henriade had been accompanied; that, though Amphion had built the walls of Thebes by his harmonious ſounds, he knew a man, now living, who had done more; for he had effected a ſudden revolution, throughout Europe, in the opinions of men; that the ſea on which Amphion ſwam was

allegorical, and ſignified time, over which Amphion triumphed; and that the dolphin was the emblem of the lovers of literature, who ſupport great men in the ſtorm.

I ſend you an account of this verbal proceſs, as drawn up in the preſence of two witneſſes, both very grave people, who, ſhould it be neceſſary, will make atteſtation on oath. Theſe people have been at work on the grand deſſert ſervice, with figures, which I have ſent to the empreſs of Ruſſia, and by which they were in the habit of allegory. I own that porcelain is too brittle, and that marble and braſs ought to be employed, to tranſmit to future ages the high eſteem of the preſent for thoſe by whom it is honoured.

We ſoon expect the ratification of the peace with the Turks. That they have not been this time baniſhed Europe, muſt be attributed to circumſtances. However they only hang by a thread; and the firſt war they ſhall undertake will probably complete their ruin.

Let me add, they have no philoſophers. You doubtleſs recollect the topic of converſation at Verſailles, when it was known that the battle of Minden was loſt—I ſhall ſay no more.

I have read the poem of Helvetius on Happineſs, and think he ought to have corrected it,

previous

previous to its publication. Connecting parts are wanting, and there are ſome lines which appear to me to be too proſaic. I am not a competent judge; I do but venture my opinion, in comparing what I read with the works of Racine, and with thoſe of a certain man who renders Swiſſerland illuſtrious by his preſence. But it is poſſible to be a great mathematician, metaphyſician, and politician, as was the cardinal de Richelieu, and yet not be a great poet. Nature has variouſly diſtributed her gifts. A union of all talents in the ſame perſon is no where to be found, except at Ferney.

Long may you enjoy the gifts which nature, prodigal to you alone, has deigned to beſtow on you; and may you continue to fill the throne of Parnaſſus, which, but for you, would perhaps eternally remain vacant!

Such are the wiſhes of the philoſopher of Sans-Souci, in behalf of the patriarch of Ferney.

FREDERIC.

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LETTER CCCLXVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 6, 1772.

TOWARD the cloſe of that illuſtrious age
Which you conſign to hiſt'ry's living page,
The ſinking fame of France one man ſuſtain'd,
And by the deed immortal honours gain'd.
The line and rule he held; the lyre he ſtrung;
Of tragic woes and epic heroes ſung;
The wondrous themes of Newton he diſcuſs'd;
And trampled bigot error in the duſt.

Of this you ought to be better convinced than any man.

As for our gunpowder, I believe it has done more harm than good; as well as the art of printing, which is of no excellence, except as far as it contributes to make excellent works known to the world, which unfortunately daily become more ſcarce.

Corn, in our neighbourhood, is exceſſively dear; I did not imagine the Swiſs wanted it; and ſtill leſs the French, whoſe œconomical works enlighten our ignorant regions on the firſt wants of nature.

I know of no treaties ſigned at Potſdam, or at Berlin. I know ſome have been ſigned at Peterſburg.

Peterſburg. Thus the public, deceived by news-writers, often honour people by attributing things to them in which they had not the leaſt part. I have indeed heard a rumour that the empreſs of Ruſſia has been diſſatisfied with the manner in which count Orlow conducted the negotiation of Focktſchani. There may perhaps have been ſome coolneſs, but I have not heard that diſgrace was complete. Lies are propagated paſſing only from houſe to houſe; well therefore may falſe reports be ſpread and increaſe, when they paſs from lip to lip, as far as from Peterſburg to Ferney. No man knows better than you do that deceit is more ſwift of progreſs than truth.

In the mean while, the Grand Turk becomes more tractable. Conferences have again been begun, which induces me to believe peace will be made. Should the contrary happen, it is poſſible that Mr. Muſtapha may not long take up his abode in Europe. But all this depends on a number of ſecondary cauſes, obſcure and impenetrable in themſelves; on the warlike inſinuations of certain courts; on the Ulmas; on the caprice of the grand vizier; and on the haughtineſs of negociators. Thus goes the world: it is governed only by goſſips. Sometimes,

when

when there are ſufficient data, the future is divined; but miſtake oftener takes place.

I ſhall never however be miſtaken, when I prognoſticate thoſe ſuffrages which the moſt diſtant poſterity will pay to you. In this prophecy there is nothing fortuitous; it is founded on your works, which are equal, and ſometimes ſuperior, to thoſe of the ancient authors who ſtill exiſt in all their glory. You carry the brevet of immortality in your pocket; and, having this, it is pleaſing to enjoy and to preſerve fame with unabated vigour, in deſpite of the injuries of time, and the decay of age. Do me the pleaſure to live, therefore, while I ſhall continue on earth. I feel I have need of you; and, being unable to converſe with you, it is exceedingly agreeable to read your thoughts.

The philoſopher of Sans-Souci ſalutes you.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, December 8, 1772.

YOUR very pleaſant poem on the Confederates inſpired me with the plan of a very gloomy

gloomy tragedy, intitled The Laws of Minos, which is ſoon to be damned by the Gauls. You will aſk how a work ſo merry as yours could to me become the ſource of dulneſs. I anſwer, becauſe I am far from you; becauſe I no longer have the honour to ſup with you; becauſe I am no longer animated by you; and becauſe the pureſt waters acquire the flavour of the earth over which they flow.

However, as the Confederates of Crete bear ſome reſemblance to thoſe of Poland, and more ſtill to thoſe of Sweden, I ſhall take the liberty to lay my ſoporative tragedy at your feet, and ſhall ſend it by the poſt in a few days; previouſly aſking pardon of your majeſty for the ſpleen it will give you. But there is no king who cannot eaſily preſerve himſelf from the ſpleen, by throwing a ſtupid work into the fire.

I keep faithful to my coffee, which I have taken theſe ſeventy years; and I drink it at preſent in your beautiful cups. But neither coffee nor porcelain will give genius; they cannot prevent a man from ſetting Frederic the Great to ſleep.

We expect a good work of which you are the ſuperintendant. I ſpeak of the peace between Ruſſia and Turkey; a work which it is

ſaid certain critics have endeavoured to condemn to deſtruction.

I know not who M. Baſilikof is, of whom there is ſo much talk. He muſt certainly be an author of great merit, and of a vigorous ſtyle.—Your majeſty is very much in the right, while you do your buſineſs ſo effectually, to laugh at human foibles. You are at the height of fame and felicity, if thoſe can render men happy: but, to enjoy happineſs, health is eſpecially wanted. I flatter myſelf you will not be attacked by the gout this winter. A hero, a legiſlator, a charming poet, and a man of univerſal genius, is not happy when he has the gout, whatever ſtoics may ſay.

Thiriot, my cotemporary, is dead. I fear it will be difficult to find a ſubſtitute for him; he was exactly the man you wanted.

I have received a letter from one of your officers, named Morival, who is at Weſel, and who informs me he is penetrated by your bounty, and that he wiſhes to ſhed his laſt drop of blood for your majeſty. You know this Morival is a native of Abbeville; and that he is the ſon of a preſident, named D'Etallonde, who is the moſt avaricious dunce in Abbeville. You know too that he was condemned, at the age of ſeventeen, with the chevalier de la Barre,

by Gallic monſters, to undergo the moſt horrible torments, for having ſung a ſong, and for not having taken off his hat, as a proceſſion of capuchins was paſſing! An act worthy of the nation of tiger-apes that performed the tragedy of Saint Bartholomew; and equally worthy of Thorn, in the year 1724. Such things never will happen in your kingdom. Some monk of Oliva will lament perhaps, and mutter damnation on you, for having abandoned the cauſe of the Lord. For my part, you have my benediction; and I daily ſhudder at the execrable adventure of Abbeville.

I venture to inform your majeſty that I think Morival worthy of an employment in your armies; and that I wiſh he could, by his ſervices and his advancement, confound the tiger-apes who, with reſpect to him, have been guilty of ſuch deteſtable fanaticiſm. I wiſh I could ſee him at the head of a company of grenadiers, in the ſtreets of Abbeville, making his judges tremble as he pronounced their pardon. For my own part, I pardon them not. I bear their abominable act continually in mind. But I muſt again read ſome of your epiſtles in verſe, to recover a little cheerfulneſs.

I throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet, with the enthuſiaſm I have ever felt for you.

The old Valetudinarian.

LETTER CCCLXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, December 22, 1772.

AFTER receiving your charming letter, and delightful verſes, of the 6th of December, here are ſome which I received from Thiriot, your late news-monger, but which are not ſo pleaſing.

The curtain drops! The farce is o'er!
The Fools Gazette I write no more!
For he who drinks of Lethe's ſtreams
Of fools and follies never dreams.
Nor proſe nor verſe is ever read
Or written here, among the dead:
A race that neither laugh nor weep,
But ſullen ages ſpend in ſleep.

Yet think not Fred'ric's glorious name,
His high exploits, and various fame,
Theſe regions reach not: well they're known,
Though never mention'd here, I own.

The words of Solomon the wiſe,
Though bold, ſhould ne'er excite ſurprize,
When he affirms that God in vain
Praiſe from the dead would try to gain.
Then well may man, who ſeeks it moſt,
Be well aſſur'd his labour 's loſt.

The

The very letters which your majeſty dictates to M. de Catt, deſerve this immortality. But no one knows better than you, ſire, that immortality is an enchanted caſtle, ſeen at a diſtance, yet entered by no one.

Of what importance, when we ſhall exiſt no more, will thoſe things be which may be ſaid of our vile corpſe, and our pretended ſoul? Yet are we all ſeduced by the phantom; beginning with your majeſty on your throne, and ending with me on my truckle bed, at the foot of Mount Jura!

It is however evident that the deiſtical or atheiſtical author of Eccleſiaſtes only is in the right: a living dog is indubitably better than a dead lion. Preſent enjoyment is wiſdom; every thing elſe is folly.

It is very pleaſant that this little book, which is entirely Epicurean, has been pronounced ſacred by us, becauſe it is Jewiſh.

You will, no doubt, oppoſe me, and will well defend your claim to immortality. You will tell me it is a pleaſure which you enjoy during life. You will already, for example, have formed in your mind a very pleaſant picture of the] compariſon which will be drawn between yourſelf and your brother Muſtapha. You will laugh at ſeeing this Muſtapha trouble himſelf

with nothing except with the ladies of his ſeraglio, who make him their ſport; and at beholding him beaten by a princeſs born in your neighbourhood; deceived, robbed, and deſpiſed by his miniſters, and in total ignorance. I will allow poſterity never can produce a more enormous contraſt. Yet do I ſuſpect that this fat hog, ſhould he be in good health, is more happy than you are.

Endeavour to ſurpaſs him; continue in the enjoyment of health, pleaſure, and fame, through the year 1773; and, if poſſible, for fifty ſucceeding years; and be pleaſed to preſerve me in your favour during the few moments I have yet to live at the foot of the Alps. This was not the place at which I wiſhed to have lived and died.

May the will of his ſacred majeſty, Chance, be done!

LETTER CCCLXX.

From the King.

Potſdam, January 3, 1773.

"A LIVING dunce, a wit when dead!
"'Tis ſtrange!" ſaid I, as on I read;
"From Thiriot ſuch a wealthy page,
"That ſpeaks the poet and the ſage!

"Can

" Can he, with ſuch apparent eaſe,
" Find words ſo fit and thoughts like theſe!
" Ah! Why, capricious Fate, conſign
" To Thiriot's tomb ſuch gifts divine?"

Yet dead or living blockhead might
With equal taſte and genius write,
Were he to chuſe, with equal care,
Such clerk as Virgil or Voltaire.

Solon I find was in the right: we cannot judge of the merit of a man till after his death. Inſtead of ſending me a bundle of illegible extracts, from bad books, Thiriot ought to have regaled me by ſuch poetry, in the preſence of which the beſt I can myſelf write is obliged to lower the flag. It ſhould ſeem, he deſpiſed fame ſo much that he diſdained its enjoyment. This ſelf-denying philoſophy I own ſurpaſſes my powers.

True it is, when we examine the thing called fame, we find it reduced to very little. To be judged by the ignorant, and eſtimated by the imbecile, or to hear our name pronounced by the crowd, who approve, reject, love, or hate without reaſon, are not circumſtances of which we ought to be vain. Yet what would become of virtuous and praiſe-worthy actions, were we not actuated by fame?

Les Dieux ſont pour Céſar, mais Caton ſuit Pompée *.

The worthy and the virtuous wiſh to merit the ſuffrage of Cato. All thoſe who have deſerved well of their country have been encouraged, amid their labours, by the prejudice of fame. It is eſſential to the good of mankind that a clear and determinate idea ſhould be obtained of that which is praiſeworthy; miſtaking which, it is poſſible for men to fall into ſtrange vagaries.

Do good to mankind, and you ſhall have their benedictions. This is true renown. There is no doubt but that every thing which can be ſaid of us, after our death, will be as indifferent to us as every thing which was ſaid of the building of the tower of Babel. Yet this will not prevent us, while accuſtomed to exiſtence, from being alive to the ſentence of poſterity. Kings ought to be more ſo than private perſons; that being the only tribunal which they have to fear.

He who poſſeſſes but a ſmall ſhare of feeling lays claim to the eſteem of his countrymen: he wiſhes to be in ſome manner eminent, and is averſe to be confounded with the vegetating crowd. This inſtinct is the reſult of the ingredients which nature has employed in moulding our clay; and of this I have my ſhare.

* The Gods are for Cæſar, Cato is for Pompey.

I notwithſtanding aſſure you, that to draw a compariſon between myſelf and my fellow monarchs, Muſtapha, or whom you pleaſe, never once entered my mind. This would be puerile and vulgar vanity. I concern myſelf only with my own affairs. To humble myſelf, I often draw a parallel between myſelf and the *to kalon*, the archetype of the Stoics; and I then confeſs, with Memnon, that beings ſo frail as we are cannot be formed for the attainment of perfection.

Were all the prejudices to be collected by which the world is governed, the catalogue would fill a vaſt volume. Let us ſatisfy ourſelves with combating thoſe that are injurious to ſociety, and not deſtroy thoſe errors that are uſeful and agreeable.

Whatever love I confeſs to have conceived for fame, I yet do not flatter myſelf that princes have the greateſt claims on renown. I think, on the contrary, that great authors, who have the art to join the uſeful and the agreeable, and by amuſing to inſtruct mankind, enjoy more durable glory; becauſe that the lives of good princes, being paſſed in action, the viciſſitude and crowd of events in ſucceſſion efface each its predeceſſor; whereas great authors are

not only the benefactors of their cotemporaries, but of all ages.

The name of Ariſtotle reſounds more loudly, in the ſchools, than that of Alexander. Cicero's works are oftener read than Cæſar's Commentaries. The good authors of the laſt age have rendered the reign of Louis XIV. more famous than the victories of the Conqueror. The names of Paul Sarpi, cardinal Bembo, Taſſo, and Arioſto, riſe ſuperior to thoſe of Charles V. and Leo X.; God's vicegerent though the latter pretended to be. Virgil, Horace, and Ovid are mentioned a hundred times oftener than Auguſtus; not to obſerve that the latter is rarely mentioned to his honour. Let us turn our eyes toward England, and we are much more deſirous to hear anecdotes relative to Newton, Locke, Shaftſbury, Milton, and Bolingbroke, than of the effeminate and voluptuous court of Charles II. the cowardly ſuperſtition of his ſucceſſor, or of all the wretched cabals by which the reign of queen Anne was agitated.

Thus are the expectations fulfilled of you preceptors of the human race, when you aſpire to fame: whereas our hopes are often deceived, becauſe we labour only for our cotemporaries, and you for all ages.

With

With us, we live no more, when a little duſt is thrown over our clay; but men converſe with all the wits of antiquity, while they read their works.

Notwithſtanding what I have ſaid, I ſhall not labour the leſs after fame, though I ſhould burſt in the purſuit. At the age of ſixty-one, man is incorrigible; and it is demonſtrated that he who does not deſire does not deſerve the eſteem of his cotemporaries. Such is the ſincere confeſſion of what I am, and of what it was the will of nature I ſhould be.

Should the patriarch of Ferney, who thinks like me, judge me to be in a ſtate of mortal ſin, I aſk abſolution. I humbly await his ſentence; and, even ſhould he condemn me, I ſhall not love him the leſs.

May he live only the thouſandth part of the duration of his fame, and his age ſhall then a thouſand times ſurpaſs the ages of the patriarchs! Such is the wiſh of the philoſopher of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

I order my letters to be copied, becauſe my hand begins to ſhake; and, as I write a ſmall hand, it might fatigue your eyes.

LETTER CCCLXXI.

From the King.

Berlin, January 16, 1773.

I RECOLLECT that Milton, in his travels through Italy, ſaw a bad piece repreſented, the title of which was Adam and Eve; and that this warmed his imagination, and cauſed him to conceive the plan of his Paradiſe Loſt. Thus the beſt effect I have produced, by mocking the Confederates, is that of having occaſioned the good tragedy which you are about to have performed at Paris. You will give me infinite pleaſure by ſending it to me; I am very certain it will not inſpire dulneſs.

Time with you has loſt his wings; Voltaire at ſeventy is as vigorous as at thirty. You alone poſſeſs the fine ſecret of remaining young. At fifty Charles V. doted; many great princes have doted all their lives. The famous Clarke and Swift declined into ſecond childhood. Taſſo, which is worſe, became a madman. Neither Virgil nor Horace attained your years. With Homer we are not ſufficiently acquainted to ſay whether his mind ſuſtained him to the laſt; but

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it is certain that neither old Fontenelle nor the eternal Saint Aulaire wrote ſuch good poetry, nor poſſeſſed the ſame brilliancy of fancy, as does the patriarch of Ferney. With you will the French Parnaſſus be entombed.

Were you young, I ſhould employ Grimm, La Harpe, and the beſt of your people at Paris, to ſend me your works; but every thing of which Thiriot ſent notice, in his correſpondence, was unworthy the trouble of being read, except the fine tranſlation of the Georgics.

Do you wiſh me to keep a correſpondent in France, to inform me that a book has been publiſhed on the art of ſhaving, dedicated to Louis XV; that eſſays on tactics are written by young officers who know not how to ſpell Vegetius; that works on agriculture are compoſed by authors who never ſaw a plough; and that France rains dictionaries, and in fine a heap of vile compilations, annals, and abrigements, in which it ſhould ſeem nothing is thought of but the ſale of paper and ink; and that the remainder is worth nothing?

Theſe are my reaſons for giving up ſuch a correſpondence, in which the utmoſt art of the writer cannot vanquiſh the ſterility of the ſubject. In a word, when Paris ſhall again poſſeſs ſuch men as Fontenelle, Monteſquieu, Greſſet,

and

and eſpecially Voltaire, I will renew the traffic; till when it muſt remain in ſuſpenſe.

I am not acquainted with this Morival, whom you mention to me, but will make enquiries concerning him. Being however in my ſervice, he will not have the gloomy pleaſure of revenging himſelf on his country. Such wrath inflames not the philoſophic ſoul.

I am buſied in celebrating the nuptials of the landgrave of Heſſe with my niece. I act a very dull part in theſe nuptials, that of being merely a witneſs. In the mean time, all things ſpeak the approach of peace, which will ſoon be concluded. Poland will then remain to be pacified; and in this the empreſs of Ruſſia, who is ſucceſsful in all her enterprizes, will infallibly ſucceed.

I am at preſent, contrary to my cuſtom, in the crowd of the faſhionable world, which prevents me at this time, my dear Voltaire, from ſaying more. As ſoon as I ſhall be myſelf again, I can then converſe more freely with the patriarch of Ferney, to whom I wiſh health and long life; the reſt he has. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCCLXXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, February 1, 1773.

I THANK you for your porcelain. The king my maſter has not any more beautiful; neither has he ſent me any of that which he has. But I thank you ſtill more for that which you have taken from me, than even for that which you have beſtowed. You have very dexterouſly cut off nine years from my life, in your laſt letter. Never were retrenchments ſo eſſential made by our comptroller-general. Your majeſty has the goodneſs to compliment me on being ſeventy years of age. Thus are kings ever deceived! I am ſeventy-nine, if you pleaſe, and ſoon ſhall be eighty. Hence I ſhall not behold the deſtruction, which I ſo paſſionately wiſh, of thoſe vile Turks, who impriſon their women, and who do not cultivate the fine arts.

You wiſh not to have a ſubſtitute for Thiriot, your coffee-houſe hiſtoriographer: he perfectly acquitted himſelf of his duty; he knew by rote the few good and the great number of bad verſes that were written at Paris: he was a man very neceſſary to the ſtate.

Your majeſty no longer chooſes
To keep a broker for the Muſes,
Who vapid verſe and proſe ſhould glean,
From pamphlet, play, or magazine.
Our new-made books, or great or ſmall,
To you are grown indiff'rent all.
For you ſuſpect the fine pure ore
Of ancient times is now no more;
And think our robes of wit and ſenſe
Will end in rags and indigence.
Ah! Why indulge ſuch melancholy?
We ſtill are rich!—Yes, rich—in folly.
Much do I doubt great Savatier *,
Whoſe eloquence fools love to hear,
Will ne'er relieve us from that mire
Of paper, ſcribbled by the quire,
In which we're plung'd, chin deep, or higher.

Cold is the heart and hot the head,
And dulneſs reigns, and taſte is fled.
Of ſhew-booths four or five we keep,
In which the gloomy Muſes weep.
Bold in aſſertion, rude, and loud,
Of critic ſcribblers what a crowd!
The preſs with learned lumber groans,
On tactics, taxes, ſemitones,
On faſhionable caps and curls,
On ladies, lords, and op'ra girls.

In diſtant province ſagely we
Have founded an academy;
At which, by rule, the world is taught
How fools may be with genius fraught.

* The Abbé Savatier, or Sabatier; a contemptible author.

A well

A well-read ſcientific wight
A learned hiſt'ry means to write,
On Monkies, and the various ſorts
Exhibited at fairs and courts.
Of certain people I've heard tell,
That on the Poliſh frontiers dwell,
Who do not paſs their time ſo well.

The new abbot of Oliva, after having laughed at the expence of theſe gentlemen, in deſpite of their *liberum veto*, lives in perfect harmony with the Greek church, that he may bring the holy work of the pacification of the Sarmatians to a happy concluſion. Some days ſince it was rumoured, in Paris, that there had been a revolution in Ruſſia. But I flatter myſelf this is coffee-houſe intelligence; I love my Catherine too well to wiſh it true.

I ſhall inceſſantly do myſelf the honour to ſend your majeſty the Laws of Minos. The work would have been better, had I poſſeſſed no more than the ſeventy years which you have allotted me. The Morival whom I mentioned to your majeſty has been ſeven or eight years in your ſervice. I do not know the name of his regiment, but he is at Weſel.

The perſons of your auguſt family are now all married *. The landgraveſs of Heſſe is

* The younger or marriageable branches can only be meant. T.

ſaid

ſaid to be very handſome. The prince of Wirtemburg, with nine children, ſome of whom will one day be under your command, at the head of your armies, is in our neighbourhood.

Preſerve your kindneſs toward me; for this, ſire, is the conſolation of my life; and, having this, I ſhall deſcend cheerfully to the grave.

LETTER CCCLXXIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 29, 1773.

I HAVE received your letter, and your charming verſes, which no doubt belye your age. I will not take your word in this point: either you are young, or you have clipped the wings of Time.

It would be raſhneſs to anſwer you in verſe, did you not know that people of my ſpecies often indulge themſelves in what would be diſapproved, were others ſo to act. One Cotys, king of a barbarous country, maintained a correſpondence in verſe with Ovid, when exiled into Pontus. This example will authorize a ſovereign of a leſs barbarous country, in the

preſent age, to write to the Apollo of Ferney, in the language of the Gauls, in deſpite of the abbé d'Olivet, and the *puriſts* of his academy.

You rightly conjecture; at Paris, I own,
No broker I want, for the Muſes are flown:
No longer they ſing on the banks of the Seine;
Its echoes diſcordant engender the ſpleen:
Nor Gallic nor Grecian,
But mountains Helvetian
They haunt: though of old
Theſe were held to be ſterile and cold,
Apollo has there fix'd his throne,
Were Plato now living, no more would he roam
To Egypt or Aſia; or ſearch through paſt ages
For ſcience and ſages:
Theſe hills are their home;
To theſe hills would he come,
Moſt certain that here he ſhould find
The greateſt of ſages and poets combin'd.

Perhaps you ſtill may have the pleaſure to ſee the Muſſulmen driven out of Europe; the peace is a ſecond time broken off; new combinations have given birth to new circumſtances. Your Gauls are active caballers. For my part, being a diſciple of the encyclopediſts, I preach univerſal peace, like a good apoſtle of the late abbé Saint Pierre; and perhaps I ſhall be no more ſucceſsful than was my maſter. I find it more eaſy for men to do harm than good; and the

the fatal chain of cauſes impels us forward in our own deſpite, and renders our projects vain; like as an impetuous wind drives the moving ſands.

This does not interrupt the cuſtomary routine of buſineſs. We are reſtoring the chaos of anarchy to order. Our biſhops are to have an annual income of twenty-four thouſand crowns, and the abbots ſeven thouſand. The apoſtles never had ſo much. We are taking meaſures to free them from mundane cares, that they may wholly and undiſturbed employ themſelves for the attainment of the celeſtial Jeruſalem, which is their true country.

I am much obliged to you for the part you take in the eſtabliſhment of my niece; her perſon is very intereſting, and her conduct leads me to hope ſhe will be as happy as our ſpecies are fated to be.

I will make enquiries concerning the companion of the unfortunate La Barre; and, if his conduct be good, to place him will not be difficult. Your recommendation of him ſhall not be inefficacious.

The news ſent you from Paris is prodigiouſly different from that which I receive from Peterſburg. People write as they wiſh, but not what

is

is truth. In fine, what they promiſed themſelves would be the fruits of intermeddling might formerly have been poſſible; but no ſuch thing muſt now be expected in Ruſſia, under the prudence of the preſent government.

Be it ſo; I have cut off ſome years from your life: nor will I retract; your works are too youthful to be thoſe of an old man. Should you ſend me the certificate of your baptiſm, I would believe it as little as I would the parſon who chriſtened you.

Appearances deceive, the proverb ſays.
Voltaire, to whom is granted length of days,
Has ſurely ſipp'd thoſe waters, fam'd of yore,
Which fault'ring age to vig'rous youth reſtore.
In life immortal, with immortal fame,
No hero e'er could like diſtinctions claim.

This living immortality is what affects me moſt: I am intereſted in your preſervation; of the future you are certain. Recollect the maxim of the emperor Auguſtus—*Feſtina lentè*. Such are the prayers which the philoſopher of Sans-Souci offers up for the patriarch of Ferney, till ſuch time as the Laws of Minos ſhall be enforced.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, March 19, 1773.

YOUR letter of the 29th of February, which is apparently dated according to your old heretical ſtyle, is not for this the leſs precious; nor is your language the leſs charming: the moſt agreeable and the moſt philoſophic thoughts drop from your pen. It is as eaſy for you to write things worthy of poſterity, as it is for the kings of the ſouth to write—"God take you, "my couſin, into his holy keeping; and you, "likewiſe, good Mr. Preſident."

I have been on the point of anſwering your majeſty from the Elyſian fields. I have the honour to write theſe few lines to you after having ſuffered fifty fits of fever, accompanied by two or three mortal diſeaſes.

I know not whether I deceive myſelf, but I much fear leſt the renewing of the war between the Porte of Muſtapha and the Porte of Catherine II. ſhould be attended with fatal conſequences. Your majeſty is prepared for all events; and, let what will happen, you will write charming poetry, and gain victories.

I have

I have the honour to ſend you the Laws of Minos, with ſuch notes as you may perhaps think intereſting. In the courſe of the piece, you will find I have profited by a certain poem, on the Confederates. You will even ſee there is ſomething reſembling the king of Sweden, your nephew. It is pretended that our miniſter of the Gauls wiſhes to appropriate this great prince to himſelf, and to incite ſome troubles in the north. Theſe are myſteries which ſurpaſs my comprehenſion. I put myſelf, relative to future contingencies, under the command of his ſacred majeſty Chance; or rather under the more certain orders of his divine majeſty Deſtiny.

The dying formerly were able to predict the future; but the world degenerates, and all I can predict is that I ſhall ever remain your admirer, and your moſt ſincerely attached Swiſs, during the few minutes I ſtill have to vegetate, between mount Jura and the Alps.

The old Valetudinarian of Ferney.

LETTER CCCLXXV.

From the King.

Potſdam, April 4, 1773.

YOU know that princes have ſpies every where, and I have them even at the foot of the Alps. Theſe ſpies have alarmed me, by informing me of the dangers with which you have been threatened. I know not how far their accounts have been juſt, for you are not ignorant that princes are liable to be deceived; but they affirm that your diſeaſe is degenerated into gout, by which I have been doubly rejoiced. This malady, at your age, prognoſticates long life; and I am very happy to find you an aſſociate of our gouty brotherhood.

I return you my thanks for the tragedy which you have ſent me. You have been ſtruck by the events which have happened in Poland, and the revolutions in Sweden, which have furniſhed you with materials for a drama. Should you think proper to make the attempt, I believe newſpapers themſelves would to you afford ſubjects for tragedy.

This is certainly a novelty, and does not reſemble any of the ſubjects on which tragic authors,

thors, ancient or modern, have treated. I ſhall not repeat the aſtoniſhment I feel, to ſee you grow young at an age when men ceaſe to exiſt. Yet, if a dilettanti may be permitted, or (to call things by their proper names) if a perſon ſo ignorant as myſelf may be allowed to expoſe my doubts, it appears to me that the death of a prieſt can affect no perſon; and that, had Aſteria or Teucer periſhed by the plots of pontiffs, the reader would have been more moved, more affected.

You, who poſſeſs the ſecret of the grand art of exciting the paſſions—you, who have more deeply examined this ſubject than a dilettanti like me can have done—you muſt undoubtedly have had your reaſons for preferring the denouement which is in this piece to that which I propoſe.

Do not expect to receive any ſuch works from me. We are better pleaſed in this country with having none but comic ſubjects; the other kind we have had. We rather wiſh to ſee tragedies performed, than to perform them ourſelves.

Great though your age is, we have your elder in this country; I mean old Pölnitz. He has been very ill, and I ſend you the hiſtory of his convaleſcence. He has now paſſed his

eighty-fifth year. It is no trifle to have lived to ſuch an advanced age, and afterward to repulſe the attacks of death like a youth.

The other piece, which begins with pleaſantry, ends with ſome moral reflections. I have given ſtrict orders that the poſtage ſhould be paid; for it is not juſt that you ſhould pay for a bundle of traſh, with which perhaps you will be wearied.

You mention your Gauls, and their intrigues: theſe intrigues are all known to me; nothing eſcapes me of all that is tranſacted from Stockholm to Conſtantinople. But we muſt wait till the curtain ſhall drop, to ſee who will be the laſt to laugh.

Your empreſs has many reſources. The north will remain in peace; or, if not, thoſe who wiſh to diſturb it, cold though it is, will burn their fingers.

This is what I take the liberty to inform you of; and I add, that your Gauls, while they find kings too credulous, may perhaps plunge themſelves into greater misfortunes than thoſe with which they have hitherto met.

But I know not what I am doing: to prognoſticate does not become my kind of face; it is not for an infidel like me to propheſy; it as ill becomes a deſcendant of the Teutons to write

write rhymes in the language of the Gauls. But I ſhall apologize by ſaying with Pilate—*Quod ſcripſi ſcripſi.*

A man may forebode falſely, and may write bad poetry; but theſe will not prevent him from being intereſted in the fate of men of genius. Nor will they prevent the philoſopher of Sans-Souci from being highly deſirous of the preſervation of the patriarch of Ferney, whom during life he will hold in the greateſt admiration.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

Ferney, April 22, 1773.

OF late, with dreary looks aghaſt,
The rivers three I'd almoſt paſs'd:
The dog three-headed, on the beach;
The Fates and Furies, three of each;
The triple Hecate, and her crew—
Stood there to pay all honours due,
And lead me to the judges three.
Alas! I'm told, from their decree
No Chriſtian ſoul eſcapes ſcot-free.

But ah! how vaſt was my ſurpriſe!
How terror-ſtruck my wond'ring eyes!

To ſee, on this infernal ſhore,
Of Trinities ſo great a ſtore?
The Hero's aid I ſtraight invok'd
Who oft at Trinities has mock'd;
And ſoon my ſuppliant cries were heard,
For much in hell he's lov'd and fear'd.
By him reſtor'd again I live,
And grateful thanks again I give.

You no doubt, ſire, have had the ſame kindneſs for the old baron Pölnitz. Hell has reſpected and ſpared him, and it will certainly reſpect you much more: you will live long enough to increaſe your dominions, for I defy you to increaſe your fame. As to your baron, he cannot but be very vain of having been ſung by you, and very happy at not having paid Charon his freight.

Your Epiſtle on this mad world is charming. You are perfectly acquainted with the country of the Gauls, of which you ſpeak; and with its paſt bankruptcies, as well as its preſent and its future.

I thank your majeſty for continually taking the emperor Julian under your protection, whoſe ſplendour was aſſuredly moſt reſpectable, in deſpite of the inſolent Gregory, and the impertinent Cyril.

I do not think our Gauls will ſoon make themſelves the ſubject of political attention: much

much ready money is wanting to enable them, at preſent, to amuſe themſelves with ravaging the world, which they, good gentlemen, do not poſſeſs. But, ſhould any misfortune happen, I take the freedom to recommend to you the ſieur Morival, who ſerves in one of your regiments at Weſel; and entreat you would ſend him to Abbeville, in Picardy, that he may bring thoſe judges to the wheel who ſix years ago condemned him, with the chevalier La Barre, to the torture, ordinary and extraordinary; to have the right hand cut off, the tongue torn out, and to be thrown alive into the flames, becauſe they did not take off their hat to a proceſſion of capuchins. The chevalier La Barre ſuffered his part of this trifling Chriſtian penance. The more fortunate Morival fled, to ſerve a king who immolates no man to capuchins, who does not tear out the tongues of young people; but who employs his tongue, his pen, and his ſword, in a manner ſuperior to all men.

Suppoſing Thorn to be in your poſſeſſion, I venture to demand juſtice of the Holy Virgin Mary, to whom ſo many young ſcholars were ſacrificed in 1724. This good woman of Bethlehem never expected that ſacrifices ſo numerous would one day be offered up to her and her ſon. A thouſand times more human blood

has

has been ſpilt for them than for the pagan deities; and you will perceive that the author of the Notes on the Laws of Minos had reaſon on his ſide. But nothing is ſo dangerous, among the Gauls, as the ſin of having reaſon on our ſide.

I wiſh to hope that the king of Poland will finiſh acting his part as Teucer did; and that the *liberum veto*, which is but the ſignal of civil war, will be aboliſhed under his reign. I wiſh ſufficiently to eſteem him, to believe he is entirely on good terms with the protector of Julian. I know he thinks like theſe two great men. How can he be angry with thoſe who puniſh his aſſaſſins, and who leave him a fine kingdom, of which he may be the maſter?

I ſhall not ſee the troubles which ſeem to be preparing; my health is in too ruined a ſtate. I ſhall gently travel in ſearch of Iſaac d'Argens; and we ſhall mutually celebrate your fame on the banks of the three rivers.

In the mean time, I entreat you would preſerve your uſual kindneſs for me; pity me, that I am deſtined to die far from your majeſty. But ſuch is the will of Fate.

LET-

LETTER CCCLXXVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, May 17, 1773.

HAD I not been overburthened with buſineſs, I ſhould have anſwered your charming letter on all the infernal Trinities, from which you have fortunately eſcaped. Accept my congratulations. You muſt wait patiently for more till I return from my journeys, which will be ended nearly about the middle of the next month.

However much in haſte I may be, I cannot but ſtop to inform you that ſlander ſpares philoſophers as little as kings. Your laſt illneſs has been attributed to cauſes which do as much honour to the vigour of your conſtitution as your verſes do to the youth, or rather to the immortality, of your genius. Continue the ſame, and ſurpaſs Methuſalem in every thing. He never had ſuch a diſeaſe at your age; and I will pledge myſelf he never wrote ſuch good poetry.

The philoſopher of Sans-Souci ſalutes the patriarch of Ferney.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXXVIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, Auguſt 12, 1773.

SINCE the Trinities are ſo much in faſhion, I will cite you three reaſons which have prevented me from anſwering you ſooner; my journey into Pruſſia, the uſe of mineral waters, and the arrival of my niece the princeſs of Orange.

I do not the leſs take part in your convaleſcence, and am better pleaſed that you ſhould give me an account, in excellent poetry, of what is paſſing on the banks of Acheron, than that you ſhould take up your abode in that country, from which no perſon ever yet returned.

The old baron has been a gueſt at all our banquets, nor does he appear to be eighty-ſix years of age. If he have eſcaped the fatal bark becauſe he could not pay his paſſage, you, after the example of Orpheus, with the ſweet harmony of your lyre, will ſoften the hard hearts of the cuſtom-houſe officers of hell; and, in every ſenſe, will be indebted for your immortality to the enchanting talents which you poſſeſs.

You have not only made your nation bluſh, for

for the cruel ſentence pronounced and executed on the chevalier La Barre, but you likewiſe protect the unfortunate who have been involved in the ſame condemnation. I own the name of this Morival, of whom you ſpeak, is unknown to me. I will enquire into his conduct; if he have merit, your recommendation will not be ineffectual. I perceive the public is pleaſed to exaggerate events. Thorn is not included in that part of Poland which has fallen to my ſhare. I ſhall not revenge the maſſacre of the innocent, for which the prieſts of this city have to bluſh; but, in the ſmall town of Warmia, I will erect a monument over the grave of the famous Copernicus, who was buried there. Believe me it is better, whenever we can, to reward than to puniſh; and to render homage to genius rather than to avenge atrocious acts that have been long committed.

A work of the late Helvetius on education has fallen into my hands. I am vexed that this worthy man has not corrected it, that he might have purified it of the falſe thoughts, and the *concetti*, which in my opinion cannot be more miſplaced than in a philoſophical work. He endeavours to prove, but ineffectually, that men are equally endowed with the powers of the mind, and that education can effect every thing.

Unfortunately,

Unfortunately, that great maſter, Experience, is his adverſary, and contradicts the principles which he labours to eſtabliſh. For my own part, I have reaſon to be ſatisfied with the too advantageous idea which he had conceived of me, and which I wiſh I could deſerve.

I know not what are the thoughts of the king of Poland, and ſtill leſs when the diet will cloſe; but I will be your pledge that there will be no new troubles, occaſioned by what is paſſing in this kingdom.

You will ſtill long live the honour of literature, and the ſcourge of the *infamous* ——; and, ſhould I not meet you *facie ad faciem*, the eye of the mind will not be the leſs fixed on your perſon: my good wiſhes will attend you every where.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, September 4, 1773.

IF your old baron have danced well at the age of eighty-ſix, I flatter myſelf you will dance ſtill better at the age of a hundred. It is

is but juſt that you ſhould long dance, to the ſound of your flute and of your lyre, after having made all the world dance, either in time or out of time, to the ſound of your trumpets.

I own it is not the cuſtom of people of your ſpecies to be long-lived. Charles XII. who would have made an excellent captain in one of your regiments; Guſtavus Adolphus, who might have been one of your generals; Walſtein, to whom you would not have confided your armies; and the great Elector, who rather was the harbinger of *the great*—none of them lived to the common age of man. You know what happened to Cæſar, who had as much underſtanding as yourſelf; and to Alexander, who got drunk when he had nothing better to do. But you will live long, in deſpite of your gout, becauſe you are temperate, and have the art to qualify the fire by which you are animated, and to prevent it from devouring you.

I am ſorry Thorn does not appertain to your majeſty, but am very glad that the grave of Copernicus is in your dominions. Erect a ſundial over his aſhes; and let the ſun, which by him was reſtored to its true place, daily ſalute him at noon, with his rays added to yours.

I am exceedingly affected to find that, while honouring the dead, you protect the unfortunate

living who merit protection. Morival ſhould be at Weſel, a lieutenant in one of your regiments. His true name is not Morival, but D'Etallonde; he is the ſon of a preſident of Abbeville. Copernicus would only have been excommunicated, had he ſurvived the book in which he demonſtrated the courſe of the planets, and of the earth, round the ſun; but D'Etallonde, at fifteen years of age, was condemned by the ſavages of Abbeville to the torture, ordinary and extraordinary; to have his hand cut off, and his tongue torn out; and to be burnt by a ſlow fire with the chevalier La Barre, the ſon of a lieutenant-general in our armies; becauſe they did not bow to the capuchins, and becauſe they ſang a ſong. The parliament of Paris confirmed this ſentence, that the biſhops of France might no longer reproach its members with having no religion. Thus theſe gentlemen became aſſaſſins in order to prove themſelves Chriſtians.

I demand pardon of ſavages, for having compared them to ſuch abominable judges, who deſerve to be flayed alive on their judgment ſeats interwoven with the *fleurs de lis*, and to have theſe flowers covered by their ſkins.

Should D'Etallonde, known in your army by the name of Morival, be found to be a man

of merit, as I am aſſured he is, condeſcend to grant him your protection. May he ſome day march into Abbeville at the head of a company, and there pardon his trembling and deteſtable judges!

Your judgment on the poſthumous work of Helvetius does not ſurpriſe me; it was what I expected; you love the true. His work is more likely to injure than to benefit philoſophy. I ſaw with grief it was but an undigeſted maſs of trivial truths, and acknowledged falſehoods. The juſtice which the author has rendered you, is a truth trivial enough; there is now no merit in the confeſſion. Not but there are many ſmall diamonds ſcattered here and there, in this irregular compilation, which gave me great pleaſure, and conſoled me for the defects of the whole.

I know not whether I deceive myſelf concerning the king of Poland, but I think he has acted wiſely by confiding in your majeſty. He has well juſtified the old proverb of the Greeks —"The half is better than the whole." There will ſtill be enough left for him to be happy. What would become of us, if felicity were only attainable, in this world, by thoſe who are in poſſeſſion of three hundred ſquare leagues of land? Muſtapha has too much land, and I ſtill

could wiſh he might be relieved from the fatigue of governing any part of Europe. In vain is it affirmed the Mahometan religion muſt counterbalance the Greek religion, and the Greek the Roman Catholic. I wiſh to ſee you yourſelf this counterpoiſe. I cannot but be afflicted, when I behold a baſhaw ſpurning the duſt of Themiſtocles and Alcibiades. This gives me as much pain as it does to ſee cardinals careſſing their minions on the tomb of Marcus Aurelius.

Seriouſly, I cannot conceive how it happens that the empreſs ſhould not have ſold her plate, and expended her laſt guinea on her ſon, the emperor—your friend, if there be friendſhip among kings—that he might have marched at the head of an army, and have waited for Catherine II. at Adrianople. The enterprize appeared to me ſo ſimple, ſo eaſy, ſo convenient, and ſo ſublime, that I cannot imagine what the reaſon was that prevented it from being executed. Be it well underſtood that your majeſty was to have had a large flagon of wine in the bargain. Each man has his ignis fatuus; this was mine.

Thus far having dar'd, I ſhrink back to my cot;
And there, *ſtatu quo*, remain ſimple John Trott.

John

John Trott in his retreat, planting, grubbing up, building, eſtabliſhing a ſmall colony, labouring, ruminating, doubting, doting, ſuffering, dying; and, moſt ſincerely regretting your majeſty, admiring throws himſelf at your feet.

LETTER CCCLXXX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, September 22, 1773.

IN deſpite of my paſt caprice, I am obliged to tell you how perfectly I have lately been convinced of my attachment to your majeſty, and your royal houſe. The ducheſs of Wirtemberg having, like many others, had the weakneſs to believe that health was to be found at Lauſanne, and that the phyſician Tiſſot beſtows it on all who can pay, has, as you know, made a journey to that town; while I, who am really more ill than ſhe, and all the princeſſes who have ſuppoſed Tiſſot to be Eſculapius, have not had ſtrength enough to leave my houſe. The ducheſs of Wirtemberg, informed of all the ſentiments which I preſerve for the memory of her mother, the margraveſs of Bareith, has deigned to viſit my hermitage,

and remained with me two days. I ſhould have known her, even had I not been pre-informed. She has her mother's turn of countenance, with your eyes. You heroes, who govern the world, do not ſuffer yourſelves to be ſubdued by the tender paſſions: you feel them like us common mortals, but you maintain your ſtate.

We creatures of ordinary clay yield to every impreſſion. I began to weep, while ſpeaking of you and the princeſs her mother; and, niece though ſhe be to the greateſt captain in Europe, ſhe could not retain her tears. She appeared to me to poſſeſs the wit and graces of your family, and ſeemed in particular to be more attached to you than to her huſband. I believe ſhe is returning to Bareith, where ſhe will find a princeſs of a different kind, mademoiſelle Clairon *, who cultivates natural hiſtory, and who is the philoſopher of his highneſs the margrave.

I know not, ſire, where you are at preſent: the gazettes affirm you are on your travels; but I am ignorant whether you are beſtowing benedictions in one of the biſhoprics of your new ſtates, or at your abbey of Oliva. I paſſionately wiſh however that the diſſidents may multiply

* The actreſs. T.

under

under your ſtandards. Several Jeſuits are affirmed to have turned Socinians; for which Heaven proſper them! It would be pleaſant ſhould they build a church to St. Servet: ſuch a revolution would effect all we want.

I renounce my fine hopes of ſeeing the Mahometans driven out of Europe; and eloquence, poetry, muſic, painting, and ſculpture, revive in Athens. Neither you nor the emperor will march for the Boſphorus; you ſuffer the Ruſſians to fight in Siliſtria, and my empreſs to ſeat herſelf for a time in the country of Thoas and Iphigenia. In fine, you will undertake no cruſades; yet I think you very ſuperior to Godfrey of Bouillon: add to which, you would have the additional pleaſure over him of ridiculing the Turks in charming verſe, as you have done the confederate Poles. But I well perceive you trouble yourſelf but little concerning any Jeruſalem, whether it be terreſtrial or celeſtial: this is a pity.

The old valetudinarian of Ferney is ever at your majeſty's feet, and is ſorry he is no longer allowed to converſe of you with the ducheſs of Wirtemberg, who adores you.

LETTER CCCLXXXI.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 9, 1773.

I RECOLLECT with regret that it is near twenty years ſince you left this place. Your memory will recal to mind what I then was: were you however to ſee me now, inſtead of a young man with a dancing tiptoe air, you would find an old decrepit body, that daily loſes a part of its exiſtence, and that imperceptibly journeys toward thoſe regions from which no one has ever returned with news of what paſſes there.

Men of obſervation have imagined they have perceived that the majority of old military men end their lives in dotage, and that men of letters preſerve their faculties better. The great Condé, Marlborough, and prince Eugene ſaw their thinking and their bodily powers decline mutually. I may have a ſimilar fate, without having poſſeſſed their talents. We know that Homer, Atticus, Varro, Fontenelle, and many others, have lived to a great age, without having felt the ſame infirmities. That you may

ſurpaſs

ſurpaſs them all in length of life, and labours of the mind, is my wiſh.

Without troubling myſelf concerning the fate that awaits me, or the more or leſs years of exiſtence, which vaniſh in the preſence of eternity, I have to tell you that the Catholic church of Berlin is to be conſecrated. The ceremony will be performed by the biſhop of Warmia; and, being a thing unheard-of among us, it draws a grand concourſe of the curious. The tomb of Copernicus is in the dioceſe of this biſhop; and I ſhall, as becomes me, erect a mauſoleum to the philoſopher. Among a multitude of errors which were propagated in his age, he is the only one who taught a few uſeful truths, and was not perſecuted.

Young D'Etallonde, lieutenant at Weſel, has not been ſo fortunate; he deſerves to be thought on. Having gained your protection, and the good teſtimony which his ſuperiors pay to his character, he will not fail to make his way.

I return to this king of Poland, of whom you ſpeak. I know it is generally enough believed, in Europe, that the partition of Poland is the conſequence of political artifices, which are attributed to me. Nothing however is more falſe. After having in vain propoſed different modifications, recourſe was neceſſarily had to

this partition, as the only means of avoiding a general war. Appearances are deceitful, and according to theſe the public judge. What I tell you is as true as the forty-eighth propoſition of Euclid.

You are aſtoniſhed that neither I nor the emperor interfere in the troubles of the Eaſt. With reſpect to the emperor, for him prince Kaunitz muſt be accountable; he will reveal to you the ſecrets of his policy. For my own part, I have long concurred in the operations of Ruſſia, by the ſubſidies which I pay; and you muſt know that an ally does not at once furniſh both money and troops. I am but indirectly engaged in theſe troubles by my union with the empreſs of Ruſſia. I perſonally renounce war, from the dread of incurring philoſophic excommunication.

I have read the article *War* in the Encyclopedic Queſtions, and have ſhuddered. How can a prince, whoſe troops are clothed in coarſe blue cloth, and their hats laced with white, after having commanded them to face to the right and to the left—how, I ſay, can he give the word for them to march to fame, without deſerving the honourable title of a chief of banditti; ſince he is only followed by a poſſe of idlers, whom neceſſity has obliged to become

mercenary

mercenary butchers; and who, under him, apply themſelves to the honeſt profeſſion of highwaymen? Have you forgotten that war is a ſcourge, which, combining every other plague, adds to them all poſſible crimes? You muſt perceive that, after having read theſe ſage maxims, a man who has his reputation at heart ought not to incur epithets which are only beſtowed on the vileſt raſcals.

You know, beſide, that the diſtance of my frontiers from thoſe of the Turks, has hitherto prevented all diſcord between the two ſtates; and a monarch muſt neceſſarily be guilty, even ſo as to deſerve death were he a private perſon, before another monarch can in conſcience have the right to dethrone him. Read Puffendorf and Grotius, and you will make very excellent diſcoveries.

There are however juſt wars, though you will not admit there are any ſuch; and thoſe which ſelf defence requires are indubitably of this kind. I own that the Turkiſh government is ſevere, and even barbarous. I confeſs that Greece, in particular, is, of all countries under their power, the moſt to be pitied. But remember the unjuſt ſentence of the Areopagus againſt Socrates: recollect the barbarity exerciſed by the Athenians againſt their admirals; who, having

ing gained a naval victory, could not inter their dead during a ſtorm.

You yourſelf ſay it is perhaps in puniſhment of ſuch crimes that they are now ſubjugated and degraded by barbarians. Is it for me to be their deliverer? Do I know whether the term of their penance be ended, or how long it ought to continue? Am I, who am duſt and aſhes, to oppoſe the decrees of Providence?

How many reaſons are there for maintaining the peace we now enjoy! To diſturb its duration would be madneſs. You perhaps ſuppoſe my arguments exhauſted, by what I have above ſaid: if ſo, you are miſtaken; another reaſon, equally valid with thoſe I have alleged, is, that the Ruſſians are perſuaded it is contrary to the dignity of their empire to uſe foreign force, when the power of Muſcovy is itſelf ſufficient to bring the war to a happy concluſion.

A ſlight check, received by the army of Romanzow, cannot be brought into compariſon with a continuation of uninterrupted ſucceſs, by which the campaigns of the Ruſſians have all been ſignalized. While that army ſhall remain on the right ſhore of the Danube, it has nothing to fear. The difficulty conſiſts in paſſing the river with ſafety. The ground on the other ſide is exceſſively uneven, and ſubſiſtence is infinitely

ſcarce.

ſcarce. It is a deſert, loaded with woody mountains, that lead toward Adrianople. The enterprize is rendered hazardous by the obſtacles to be encountered in amaſſing magazines, and tranſporting them with the army. But, as the empreſs has hitherto met with no unconquerable impediments, it is to be hoped her generals will fortunately conclude this very hazardous expedition.

Thus do military reaſonings eſcape me. I aſk pardon of philoſophy. I am yet only a quaker by halves; when I ſhall be as much ſo as William Penn, I will declaim like others againſt thoſe privileged aſſaſſins who ravage the earth.

In the mean time, grant me abſolution for having dared to pronounce the word *campaign*, when writing to you. The philoſopher of Sans-Souci writes in the hope of receiving plenary indulgence, and aſſures you he inceſſantly prays for the patriarch of Ferney.

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCCLXXXII.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 24, 1773.

IF it be forbidden me ever to ſee you more, I am not the leſs pleaſed that the ducheſs of Wirtemberg has viſited you. This manner of converſing by attorney is not equal to the *facie ad faciem*. Hearſay and letters do not ſupply the place of Voltaire, to thoſe who are allowed to poſſeſs him in perſon.

I applaud the virtuous tears which you ſhed at the remembrance of my deceaſed ſiſter. I certainly ſhould have mingled mine, had I been preſent at the affecting ſcene. Be it weakneſs, or be it exceſſive adulation, I have for this ſiſter executed that which Cicero projected for his Tullia: I have erected a temple to her, and dedicated it to friendſhip. Her ſtatue ſtands at the farther part, and on each pillar is a *maſcaron* * containing the buſt of ſome of the heroes of Friendſhip. I ſend you the plan of this temple,

* The word *maſcaron* ſeems ſcarcely conſonant to the plan of the king, if underſtood in its common technical acceptation, that of a caricature maſk. T.

which

which is placed in one of the groves of my garden. To this I often go, there to recollect my loſſes, and the happineſs I formerly enjoyed. I have been returned from my journeys more than a month. I have travelled into Pruſſia, to aboliſh ſervitude; reform barbarous laws; promulgate others more rational; open a canal, by which the Viſtula, the Sretz, the Wartha, the Oder, and the Elbe have a communication; rebuild towns, that have lain in ruins ever ſince the plague of 1709; drain twenty miles of marſhy land; and eſtabliſh a police in a country where the name had before been unknown.

I thence went into Sileſia, to conſole my poor Jeſuits for the rigours of the court of Rome; to corroborate their order; and to form a corps, through divers provinces, in which I preſerve them; thus to render them uſeful to the country, by placing them over ſchools for the inſtruction of youth, to which occupation I wiſh them to be entirely confined.

I have beſide ordered ſixty villages to be built, in Upper Sileſia, where there was land ſtill uncultivated; each village to conſiſt of twenty families. I have cauſed high roads to be made among the mountains, for the facility of trade; and two towns that had been burnt to

be

be rebuilt. Their houſes were of wood; they are to be of brick, and even of hewn ſtone, brought from the mountains.

I ſhall not ſpeak to you of the troops; that is a ſubject too ſeverely prohibited, at Ferney, for me to touch upon.

You will perceive, while doing all this, I have not remained with folded arms.

Neither I nor the emperor ſhall interfere with the creſcent: there are no more reliques to be recovered from Jeruſalem. We hope that peace will perhaps be made this winter: not to mention that we love the proverb which ſays—"Live and let live." The peace has ſcarcely continued ten years, and ought to be preſerved as long as poſſible without riſk; ſtill neither more nor leſs continuing to put ourſelves in ſuch a condition as not to be taken unprovided by ſome chief of banditti, the leader of hireling murderers.

This ſyſtem is neither that of Richelieu nor of Mazarin; but it is that of the good of the people, who ought to form the principal object of the magiſtrate's care by whom they are governed.

To you do I wiſh this peace, accompanied by all poſſible proſperity; and I hope the pa-

triarch of Ferney will never forget the philoſopher of Sans-Souci, who admires, and ever will admire, his genius, while any animal heat ſhall remain unextinguiſhed. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXXXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Ferney, October 28, 1773.

GUIBERT, your pupil in the ſchool
Where men are taught to kill by rule,
Of warriors has beheld the firſt
That genius ever fondly nurs'd:
He whom both kings and heroes, all,
Or Teuton, Briton, Spaniard, Gaul,
Would imitate, but cannot equal.
Guibert declares he read the ſequel
Of this ſo potent monarch's ſtory,
The ſum of all his deeds of glory,
Upon his viſage, in his eyes,
Though clos'd his lips, in prudence wiſe.
But vain ſuch prudence; well are known
The ſplendours of his reign and throne!
His future, paſt, and preſent fame
All tongues, all ages, ſhall proclaim!

This M. Guibert, ſire, imitates all Europe, and ſpeaks of your majeſty with enthuſiaſm.

He

He affirms he found you in a condition to make twenty campaigns; from which God preſerve us! I wiſh you could bring yourſelf to be of his opinion: he affirms you have a body worthy of your ſoul, and you pretend the direct contrary. True it is, he has principally contemplated you on review days; and you may bridle and trick yourſelf out, on theſe occaſions, like a beauty before her looking glaſs.

I do not propoſe twenty campaigns to your majeſty; I aſk for only one or two; and theſe to be againſt the enemies of Jeſus Chriſt, and of all the fine arts. I have ſaid to myſelf—"He protects the Jeſuits, and might well pro-"tect the Virgin Mary againſt Mahomet; for "which the good Virgin no doubt would give "him the choice of three or four fine provinces, "as a reward for ſo holy an act."

I have juſt read over the article *War*, of which your pacific majeſty has had the goodneſs to ſpeak. It is indeed rather inſolent, in exceſs of humanity; but let me beg of you to conſider that all this abuſe can only alight on the Turks, who have come from the eaſtern ſhores of the Caſpian ſea, almoſt as far as Naples; and who, as they travelled, ſeized on holy places, and even on the ſepulchre of Jeſus Chriſt, who never was buried. In a word, I and the mad-

man Peter the hermit, who preached up the cruſades, are as like as two peas.

The emperor of the Romans, who loves you, and who regards himſelf as your diſciple, cannot complain of me; with a daſh of the pen I have allotted him a very fine kingdom. Had you all been willing, in leſs than ten years a Greek opera might have been acted at Conſtantinople. Heaven has not bleſſed my intentions, moſt Chriſtian though they were. Philoſophers however will bleſs you, for erecting a mauſoleum to Copernicus, at the time that your friend Muſtapha cauſes the Ariſtotelian philoſophy to be taught at Stamboul. You will not rebuild Athens, but you will raiſe a monument to reaſon and genius.

When I entreated you to become the reſtorer of the fine arts in Greece, my prayer did not go ſo far as to conjure you to re-eſtabliſh the Athenian democracy: I do not love the government of the mob. You might have beſtowed the government of Greece on general Lentulus, or on ſome other general, who might have prevented the modern Greeks from committing as many follies as their anceſtors did.

But, in fine, I abandon all my projects. You prefer the port of Dantzic to that of Piræus, and I believe your majeſty is in the right; and

that, in the preſent ſtate of Europe, the port of Dantzic is of much the greateſt importance.

I know not now what kingdom I can beſtow on the empreſs Catherine II.; and I freely own this is an affair with which you muſt be better acquainted than I can be, and that it muſt be referred to you. Happen what will, you will always be careful to preſerve immortal fame. May your life approach immortality!

LETTER CCCLXXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, November 8, 1773.

FOR the ſpace of twenty years I have not found ſo much conſolation as in the letter, dated the 24th of October, with which your majeſty honoured me. Your temple to the manes of your ſiſter, *Willeminæ ſacrum*, is worthy of the fineſt ages of antiquity, and of you alone in the preſent times. The ducheſs of Wirtemberg will ſhed many tears of affection, when ſhe ſees the deſign of this fine monument.

Your canal, your towns rebuilt, your marſhes drained, your villages colonized, and ſervitude aboliſhed, are the works of Marcus Aurelius, or of

of Julian. I ſay of Julian, for I reſpect him as the greateſt of the emperors; and am continually angry with La Bletterie, who has only juſtified him by halves, and who has been thought impartial for no other reaſon but becauſe he has not beſtowed abuſe on him, equal to the calumnies of Gregory of Nazianzen, and Theodoret.

I bleſs you, in my village, for having built ſo much; I bleſs you, by the ſide of my marſh, for having drained ſo much; I bleſs you, with my labourers, for having delivered ſo many from ſlavery, and for thus having metamorphoſed them into men. Gengis-kan and Tamerlane have, like you, gained victories, and conquered more provinces than yourſelf; but they laid waſte, and did not improve. I know not what reception they would have given the Jeſuits; but I am certain you will render them uſeful, without permitting them to be dangerous. Marc Antony, it is ſaid, travelled from Brundiſium to Rome, in a car drawn by lions: you harneſs foxes to your carriage, but you have put bridles in their jaws; and, when it ſhall be neceſſary, you, like Sampſon, will ſet fire to their tails. What vexes me is, that you do not eſtabliſh a Socinian church, after having appointed ſeveral for the Jeſuits. There are Socinians ſtill to be met with in Poland; they

ſwarm in England, and we have ſome of them in Swiſſerland. Julian would certainly have favoured them: they hate that which he hated; they deſpiſe that which he deſpiſed; and they, like him, are worthy men. Beſide, having ſuffered ſo much perſecution among the Poles, they have ſome claim to your protection.

After all the ill which I have dared to pronounce againſt the Turks to your majeſty, I do not propoſe you ſhould build a moſque. Barbaroſſa however had one at Marſeilles; but you are not formed to imitate us. All I know is, that your name will be revered from Dantzic to Turkey, and from the abbey of Oliva to Saint Sophia. With reſpect to us, we act comic operas.

May your majeſty deign to preſerve your kindneſs to the old Valetudinarian *Libanius*.

LETTER CCCLXXXV.

From the King.

November 26, 1773.

MUST I addreſs, in wretched rhymes,
The god that o'er Parnaſſus reigns?
Muſt I commit poetic crimes,
And hoarſely chaunt my rugged ſtrains?

Born

Born in the ſnow-encumber'd north,
Where froſt forbids the ſtreams to flow,
Oh Seine! unconſcious of thy worth,
Oh Muſes! ne'er your haunts to know;

Decay'd and broken, feeble, old,
Were I to ſing Voltaire divine
In lays ſo vapid, dull, and cold,
The fate of Marſyas muſt be mine.

M. Guibert ſaw me with young eyes that reſtored me to youth. My hairs grow grey, my ſtrength forſakes me, and my ardour decays. Voltaire alone has the art of ſelf-renovation. The favourites of Apollo are better gifted than thoſe of Mars. Inſtead of twenty campaigns, which M. Guibert ſo liberally beſtows on me, I have only one to make, which is that of the laſt decampment.

Thus ſituated, men do not think of ſeeking to combat in Thrace and in Scythia. Be perſuaded that the empreſs of Ruſſia, jealous of her nation's glory, is capable of making an effectual peace, without foreign aid. You, whom I ſuppoſe to be immortal, wiſh to be a ſpectator of one of thoſe grand revolutions that change the face of Europe. Should no ſuch revolution come to paſs, accuſe the moderation of the empreſs of Ruſſia. This princeſs does not think, like Charles XII., that no peace ought to be

made with a foe, except by dethroning him in his metropolis. The Greeks, for whom you ſo warmly intereſt yourſelf, are, it is ſaid, ſo debaſed that they do not merit freedom.

Pray tell me, how can you wiſh to excite war in Europe, after the ſovereign contempt which you and the encyclopediſts have loudly teſtified for warriors? Who would be daring enough to incur excommunication major, from the patriarch of Ferney, and the whole encyclopedic race? Who would wiſh to acquire the fine title of the Chief of Robbers, or even of Robber itſelf? Reſt perſuaded that Greece will be left in ſlavery; and that no monarch will begin war, till plenary indulgence ſhall firſt have been obtained from the philoſophers.

Theſe gentlemen will henceforth govern Europe, after the manner in which it was formerly ſubjected by the popes. I even believe that M. Guibert muſt have abjured his murderous occupation, in your preſence; and that he will turn capuchin, or philoſopher, that he may in you find a potent patron. Miſſionaries are neceſſary, for philoſophers to increaſe the number of ſimilar converſions; employing theſe means, they will imperceptibly diſburthen kingdoms of thoſe vaſt armies by which they are eaten up: and thus, by degrees, there will no longer

be

be any body to fight. Neither ſovereigns nor people will be inſpired with thoſe wretched paſſions, the conſequences of which are ſo fatal; and the reaſon of all men will be as perfect as mathematical demonſtration.

I much regret that my age deprives me of the ſight of ſo fine a day, of the morning of which I ſhall not ſo much as have a glimpſe. My cotemporaries will be pitied, for having been born in an age of darkneſs, at the cloſe of which the twilight glimmering of the ſplendid meridian of reaſon firſt appeared.

All depends on the age in which a man is born. Though I came too late into the world, I do not regret the circumſtances: I have ſeen Voltaire; and, though I ſee him no more, I read his works ſtill, and he correſponds with me.

May you long continue to do the ſame, and peacefully to enjoy that glory which is your due, as well as all the good which is wiſhed you by the philoſopher of Sans-Souci!

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, December 8, 1773.

A BEAUTY of Paris, for whom you care but little, pretends you will be angry with me, for having conſigned your majeſty over to the devil: and I affirm, on the contrary, you will pardon me, and that even Beelzebub himſelf will be well ſatisfied; convinced as he is that there never was at the head of an army perſon more diabolic than yourſelf; whether for the drawing up a plan of campaign, for putting it in execution, or for repairing accidental error.

True it is, I have no love for your heroic trade, though I revere it. Nor is it for me to judge of the tactics of M. Guibert. Theſe fine things I do not underſtand. I only know, he very rightly ſuppoſes you to be the firſt of tacticians, to which I add, the firſt of politicians; for you have lately gained a fine kingdom, without the loſs of a man; and not only are you in poſſeſſion of biſhoprics and abbeys—not only do we behold you the general of the Jeſuits, after having been the general of an army—but you further cut canals as in China, and enrich

rich the kingdom which by a ſtroke of the pen you beſtowed upon yourſelf. What further remains for you? Nothing, except long to live, and enjoy your labours.

As your majeſty will probably receive my ſmall packet during the merry feſtival of Chriſtmas, and that the God of peace will again viſit earth before the expiration of three weeks, I recommend myſelf to him, that he may obtain my pardon from you; and that you will forgive me all the ſtrange things I have ſaid to your majeſty, and the cordial hatred which I have for your Cæſar-profeſſion. This Cæſar, as you well know, pardoned after having vanquiſhed his enemies; and you will treat me with like clemency, after having heartily laughed at me.

The old Valetudinarian of Ferney, who ſometimes makes merry in his intervals of pain, throws himſelf at your feet, with five or ſix kinds of veneration for your five or ſix kinds of grand talents; and for your own perſon, in which they are united.

LET-

LETTER CCCLXXXVII.

From the King.

December 10, 1773.

IT is but juſt that a country that had produced Copernicus ſhould no longer crouch under that barbariſm, of every kind, into which it had been plunged by its potent tyrants. This tyranny was ſo great, that the grandees, the better to exerciſe their caprice, had deſtroyed all the ſchools; imagining that it was more eaſy to oppreſs the ignorant than the well informed.

The provinces of Poland cannot be compared to any of the ſtates of Europe; they can find no reſemblance, except in the wilds of Canada. Conſequently labour and time are neceſſary, in order for them to regain that which their bad adminiſtration had neglected during ſo many ages. Your prayers have been heard; the Turks have been beaten by the Ruſſians. Siliſtria is taken, and the vizier is fled toward Adrianople. Muſtapha has been taught to tremble in his ſeraglio; and perhaps his misfortunes will render him more docile, and ready to ſign a peace, which preſent circumſtances announce to be neceſſary. Should the victorious

Ruſſians

Ruſſians penetrate as far as Stamboul, I will entreat the empreſs to ſend you the handſomeſt Circaſſian of the ſeraglio, eſcorted by a black eunuch, who ſhall proceed immediately with her to the ſeraglio of Ferney. On this beautiful body you may make ſome phyſical experiments, by animating with the Promethean fire ſome embryo who ſhall inherit your fine genius.

The landgraveſs of Darmſtadt is returned from Peterſburg. She is unceaſing in her praiſe of the empreſs, of the grand projects which the czarina has executed, and the grand deſigns on which ſhe ſtill meditates. Diderot and Grimm are to paſs the winter there. The Ruſſian court unites pomp, magnificence, and politeneſs; and the empreſs ſurpaſſes us all, by the gracious manner in which ſhe receives ſtrangers.

After having ſpoken to you of this court, how can I mention the Jeſuits to you? I have preſerved them becauſe they may inſtruct youth. The pope has docked their tail, which they can no longer uſe, like the foxes of Sampſon, to ſet the harveſt of the Philiſtians in flames. Add to this, Sileſia has neither produced a father Guignard nor a Malagrida. The paſſions of us Germans are not ſo lively as thoſe of the ſouthern nations.

Should

Should you remain unaffected by all theſe reaſons, I will allege one which is ſtill ſtronger. I promiſed, at the peace of Dreſden, that religion ſhould remain *in ſtatu quo* throughout my provinces. I have had Jeſuits in them, whom I therefore am bound to protect. Catholic princes have a very convenient pope, at their own diſpoſal, who abſolves them from their oaths by the plenitude of his power. For my part, no man will abſolve me. I am obliged to obſerve my word; and a pope would think himſelf polluted, were he to grant me his benediction. He would cut off the fingers with which he ſhould have beſtowed abſolution on an accurſed heretic of my ſtamp.

If you do not reproach me with my Jeſuits, I will not ſay a word to you concerning your Franciſcan penitents. There is no odds in the match. My Jeſuits have produced great men; and lately, among the reſt, father Tournemine, your tutor. The capuchins vaunt of St. Cucufin, whom they have my free leave to praiſe as much as they pleaſe. But you are the protector of theſe people, and are ſingly worth the whole ſect of Ignatius. I therefore admire in ſilence; aſſuring the patriarch of Ferney that the philoſopher of Sans-Souci will continue ſo to admire till the ſaid philoſopher ſhall be no more.

Vale. FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCLXXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, December, 1773.

HOW have I been deceived in my expectations! All men of letters have complimented me on the new manner in which I had praiſed heroes, by conſigning them to the devil *: they thought the turn not unartificial. Rouſſeau has ſaid—

Mais, à la place de Socrate,
Le fameux vainqueur de l'Euphrate
Sera le dernier des mortels †.

This idea appeared equally groſs and erroneous to all good judges; for it is more than cynical extravagance to affirm that the great captain of Greece, the conqueror of the maſter of Aſia, the avenger of the aſſaſſination of Darius, the hero who built more cities than Gengis-kan deſtroyed, the man who changed the courſe of the commerce of the world—was the laſt of mor-

* Alluding to a paſſage in the Epiſtle by Voltaire on Tactics, at which the king took offence: a letter from the king, preceding this, ſeems to be wanting.

† But, compared to Socrates, the famous conqueror of the Euphrates would be the laſt of mortals.

tals.

tals. But to bewail mankind, who ſuffer under the ſcourge of war, and at the ſame time to admire the great maſters of that cruel but neceſſary art—to praiſe Cyrus, Alexander, Guſtavus, &c. by feigning anger againſt them—is what has pleaſed every body, except the lady whom I had the honour to mention to you.

Had I a petition to preſent to Alexander, in behalf of ſome Grecian officer condemned by the Areopagus, I ſhould have accompanied the petition with my Epiſtle on Tactics.

The former parliament of Paris was much more unjuſt than the Areopagus; and you are, at leaſt, equal to Alexander, of whom Juvenal and Boileau have ſpoken ſo much ill.

I throw myſelf at your feet, ſire, in behalf of young Morival. Your majeſty will add this fine action to all you have done. Nothing can be more worthy of you than to protect him; for which the old inhabitant of Ferney will think himſelf under the higheſt obligation, and will die contented.

Accept, ſire, my reſpectful and lively gratitude.

LETTER CCCLXXXIX.

From the King.

January 4, 1774.

THE lady of Paris was certainly wrong; and you have well divined, when you ſuppoſed I ſhould not be in the leaſt vexed by what you have written. Love and hatred are not to be commanded; and, on theſe ſubjects, each man muſt be left to think for himſelf.

It muſt nevertheleſs be confeſſed that the ancient philoſophers, who did not love war, were leſs prodigal of harſh terms than our modern ones are; who, ſince Racine inſerted the word *executioner* in his elegant poetry, imagine this word has obtained titles of nobility, and employ it on all occaſions in their proſe. I confeſs I ſhould be as much pleaſed with declaiming againſt the quartan ague as againſt war, for it is loſt time. Governments ſuffer cynics and their followers to bark, but the ague fit nevertheleſs returns.

The lines you have written, however, are excellent; and prove, to the aſtoniſhment of Europe, that your genius does not grow old. Preſerve this youthful ſpirit; and, were you to

write a ſatire on me, in the moſt cutting language, at the age of a hundred, I previouſly give you my promiſe that the patriarch of Ferney ſhall be allowed to ſay whatever he pleaſes of the philoſopher of Sans-Souci.

LETTER CCCXC.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, January 1774.

THOUGH I have conſigned you to the infernal crew, in company with Cyrus the Great, Guſtavus, &c. I have nevertheleſs an act that has ſomething divine in it, to propoſe to your majeſty; or rather ſomething very humane, and worthy of yourſelf. This is no joke, but a very eſſential favour, which I conjure you to grant me.

The young gentleman who, under the name of Morival, is a lieutenant in the regiment of Eichmann, at Weſel, cannot inherit the eſtates of his father and mother, while he ſhall remain ſuffering under a criminal proſecution, and the abominable ſentence that was pronounced againſt him in Abbeville, when he was but ſixteen. He is the ſon of a preſident of Abbeville, and

his name is D'Etallonde. Since he has been in your ſervice, he has given great ſatisfaction at Weſel. I know him to be one of the braveſt and moſt prudent officers in your army. His whole ambition is to live and die in your majeſty's ſervice; he will never acknowledge another king, or another maſter. But it is abominable that he ſhould remain condemned to the ſame death which was ſuffered by the chevalier La Barre, who wrote a ſhort commentary on your Art of War.

Such juridical murders will ever diſhonour the former parliament of Paris; the enemy of its king, of reaſon, and of juſtice; and which was not ſufficiently puniſhed by being broken.

It is our intention either to obtain a pardon for Morival, or to have the ſentence annulled by which he has been condemned. I therefore moſt earneſtly entreat your majeſty to be pleaſed to grant Morival leave of abſence for a year, during which he ſhall remain with me. I will be anſwerable for his perſon, and will aid him to obtain as many recruits as you ſhall pleaſe. There is no place in the world in which ſoldiers may more eaſily be raiſed, than in the little canton which I inhabit; and which is preciſely a league from Swiſſerland, from Geneva, from Savoy, and from Franche-Comté. I, notwithſtanding

ſtanding my great age, will undertake perſonally to aſſiſt him in ſupplying you with the fineſt men, and in ſelecting the moſt prudent.

I requeſt, as a favour, that you would grant him a furlough for a year. He will depart immediately, and perhaps may return to Weſel in three months.

Should he not be able to obtain his purpoſe in France, he will not have the leſs obligation to your majeſty; and you will have done exactly what Cyrus and Guſtavus, and thoſe people of whom I have ſpoken ſo ill, would have done in your place.

I throw myſelf at your feet, with the ſentiments I always entertained, and in which I ſhall die.

LETTER CCCXCI.

From the King.

February 10, 1774.

YOUR Tactics have given me a good fit of the gout, from which I am not yet recovered; but this ſhall not prevent me from anſwering you, becauſe I know great lords will be obeyed with promptitude.

You

You requeſt one Morival, named D'Etallonde, from me, who is an officer at Weſel; and he ſhall have permiſſion to go to Ferney for a year. It even depends entirely on yourſelf to appoint him the chief of your pretorian band. Let him neither raiſe recruits, nor be otherwiſe buſied for me. But I give you notice that, being proſcribed in France, it depends on you to take meaſures for his ſafety at Verſoy; and that I do not believe you have ſufficient influence to obtain his pardon. The chevalier La Barre and he having been accuſed of the ſame crime, it would be injurious to the dignity of the king of France, after the one has been publicly executed, ſhould he pardon the other, which he could not do without appearing ſelf-contradictory. The judges of the chevalier La Barre have not to my knowledge been puniſhed; I have never even heard that any of the perſons who ſat in judgment at Amiens have been proſecuted. Therefore, unleſs from your retreat in Ferney you govern France, I cannot perſuade myſelf that you will obtain any act of grace in favour of this young man.

The only profit he will draw from his journey, will be that of being undeceived by you, relative to the prejudices he may have imbibed in favour of his profeſſion. But to you I aban-

don him; and, ſuppoſing you ſhould convert him, it will not be difficult for me to find a ſubſtitute.

I further inform you there are two ſhoeblacks at Magdeburg, who formerly were ſoldiers in the regiment of Picardy; and a barber at Berlin, who has ſerved in the armies of marſhal de Broglio; and that all three are very much at your ſervice, if you wiſh to have them at Ferney, to increaſe the colony, which you are ſettling there.

On all this I wait your determination; and, though I have incurred your hatred, and my own diſgrace, I pray Apollo, and Eſculapius his ſon, the god of phyſic, to take you into their holy keeping.

LETTER CCCXCII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 16, 1774.

YOU cannot but know I am by birth a German, and that conſequently the French language is not my mother tongue. Whatever trouble you may have taken to teach me its various turns and ſhades, whether it be becauſe of

of my attention to buſineſs, or becauſe of the active life which the duties of my ſtation oblige me to lead, I have not been able to profit by your inſtructions ſo much as I could have wiſhed.

I have therefore ill underſtood your poem on Tactics. I have never found the terms "hatred," and "conſigning to the infernal fiends," in any dictionary of billets doux; at leaſt, not unleſs the dictionary were written by Tiſiphone, Megera, or Alecton. But theſe are trifles; you are privileged to ſay what you pleaſe, and by beautiful poetry to ennoble what is vulgarly called abuſe.

When Rouſſeau ſays—

Mais, à la place de Socrate,
Le fameux vainqueur de l'Euphrate
Sera le dernier des mortels—

in one ſenſe he is not wrong; becauſe Socrates was the wiſeſt and moſt moderate of mankind, and Alexander the moſt diſſolute and choleric of mortals; who, in the phrenzy of drunkenneſs, killed Clytus; who, in another fit of paſſion, put the philoſopher Calliſthenes to death; and who, from weakneſs indulging the caprice of a courtezan, burnt Perſepolis.

Certain it is that a character ſo ungovernable

could not, in any manner, be compared to Socrates. But it is equally true that, had Socrates been at the head of the expedition againſt the Perſians, he probably would not have equalled either the activity or the bold reſolutions of Alexander, by the aid of which he conquered ſo many nations.

I would as ſoon declaim againſt the purple fever as againſt war; for we may as eaſily prevent the one from committing its ravages, as the other from troubling the earth. Wars there have been, ever ſince the world was a world; and wars there will be, long after you and I have paid the debt of nature.

Your Morival, has a permiſſion to repair into Swiſſerland for a year. I am perſuaded, as I have already informed you, that nothing will be obtained in his favour. But, in fine, he will ſee you; and he may teach the Pruſſian exerciſe to the French garriſon which you ſhall ſtation at Verſoy.

It is ſaid this town is riſing, and makes an aſtoniſhing progreſs; and its flouriſhing ſtate is attributed to you, and to the duke de Choiſeul. Hence, no doubt, M. d'Aiguillon, the new miniſter for the war department, will put the finiſhing hand to this work.

In the mean time, I continually have the gout,

gout, yet I do not write againſt it; and, whether you do love me or whether you do not, I do not the leſs wiſh you long life and proſperity.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXCIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, March 11, 1774.

BE perſuaded I am exceedingly ſorry that you have the gout; not merely becauſe I have had a violent attack myſelf, and becauſe we pity thoſe ſufferings which we have felt; but becauſe the health of your majeſty is ſomewhat more precious, and more neceſſary to the world, than mine; and becauſe I intereſt myſelf in your welfare much more than you imagine. I ſhall ſpeak no more of all thoſe vile jokes on the art of murdering; I think only of your preſervation. You never can add to your glory; yet endeavour to add to your length of life.

Do not grant me the favour for which I petition, in behalf of Morival, by pouting and mocking. The poor lad only wiſhes to live and die in your ſervice; he hopes he ſhall

obtain from our chancellor letters of reinſtatement, which will enable him to inherit, and render him capable of being more uſeful to his regiment. Theſe letters are granted without difficulty to ſuch as have only been condemned for contumacy.

I can further aſſure your majeſty that, at preſent, the ſentence which was executed againſt the chevalier La Barre excites repentance. I have in my own hands the authentic declaration of a magiſtrate of Abbeville, who was the firſt cauſe of that honourable affair. The following are his words:

" We declare that we not only hold the ſen-
" tence againſt the chevalier La Barre in hor-
" ror, but that we ſhudder at the name of the
" judge who drew up this execrable indictment;
" in proof of which we have ſigned this certifi-
" cate, and ſealed it with our arms.

" Abbeville,
" November 9, 1773. (Signed) " *De Belleval.*"

Beſide, it is a part of our juriſprudence, if we have any juriſprudence, that a man, having been judged during his abſence, ſhall be heard when he ſurrenders himſelf: and it was by this means that I had the happineſs to procure the reinſtatement of the family of Sirven; in which hope I interceded

terceded with your majeſty in behalf of Morival, who is yours. If I ſhould be unable to obtain that juſtice which I demand, I will ſend Morival back immediately; and he will ſtill find conſolation in the honour of ſerving a warlike and philoſophic king, who examines all and does all himſelf, and who never would have ſuffered ſuch a deteſtable butchery. I therefore thank your majeſty with the utmoſt ſenſibility of heart; and ſhould I not ſucceed in my charitable work, I ſhall not be the leſs grateful for your extreme bounty.

Accept, ſire, the profound reſpect of the old Valetudinarian, who is as much yours as if he were in good health.

I have juſt now found a letter from Morival, and I underline the paſſage in which he explains his views to me, relative to the ſervice. You will ſee, ſire, that you do not grant your protection to an unworthy ſubject.

I will venture to requeſt another favour in his behalf, in caſe he ſhould be unſucceſsful in his ſuit; which is, that you would, in company with your other officers, ſend him to the Ruſſian army. He will meet with nothing ſo barbarous among the Turks, as that which has been tranſacted at Abbeville.

LET-

LETTER CCCXCIV.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 29, 1774.

YOUR eloquence reſembles that of the famous orator Antony, whoſe art was ſuch, in pleading his cauſes, that he gained them all, even when unjuſt. I feel myſelf very much obliged to you for your hatred; and I beg you will be kind enough to continue it, as the greateſt favour you can do me. You will perſuade me preſently that it is midnight at high noon.

I ſuppoſe Morival muſt now be at Ferney. You better underſtand the French laws than I do; and you will reconcile the preſence of a baniſhed man with theſe ſame laws, which forbid him to enter any province appertaining to that empire. You will obtain his pardon, and a reward for having had wit enough to eſcape the miſerable death La Barre endured.

I wiſh to believe there are ſome ſenſible people even at Abbeville, who condemned the barbarous ſentence of their judges. But let fanaticiſm loudly aſſert that religion is offended, and you will ſee theſe ſame judges, hurried away

away by the whirlwind of paſſion, exerciſe ſimilar cruelties on the perſons who ſhall be accuſed.

Your French judges reſemble ours: when the inflammatory fever is on the latter, woe be to the victim who ſhall fall in their way, during their delirium.

But it is for the protector of Calas and Sirven to ſuccour Morival, and to wipe away the diſgraceful ſtains from his nation, which have been imprinted on it by ſuch atrocious barbarities as thoſe of Abbeville and Toulouſe.

While writing, I receive your ſecond letter, dated the 11th, which finds me without gout; though I am not the leſs obliged to you for the compliment you pay me, relative to my malady. Be perſuaded, however, that I am perfectly convinced the world did very well before my exiſtence, and that it will do the ſame when I ſhall be confounded with the elements of which I am formed. What is a man, an individual, compared to the multitude of beings that people this earth! Princes and kings are plentiful, but Virgils and Voltaires are ſcarce.

We are acquainted with the *Taureau Blanc* * here, but not with the Dialogue between Prince Eugene and Marlborough, which you men-

* The White Bull, by Voltaire. T.

tion.

tion *. You are alſo ſaid to have written one, the interlocutors of which are the Virgin Mary and La Pompadour. I think the ſubject a fruitful one, and I entreat you to ſend it me. The works of your youth conſole me in my dotage.

Long continue young; long continue to hate me; ſatirize poor ſoldiers; decry thoſe who defend their country; and know that all this will not prevent me from loving you. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXCV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, April 26, 1774.

PERMIT me to ſpeak to your majeſty of your young officer, to whom you have granted leave to come hither. I imagined I ſhould meet a young Frenchman with ſome remains of that giddy thoughtleſſneſs for which the nation

* *Dont vous me parlez.*—Voltaire mentioned no ſuch dialogue in the laſt letter; and it is not probable that he wrote another. The dialogues here cited were both written by the king, who appears to have been ambitious to have his writings miſtaken for thoſe of Voltaire. T.

is

is ſo much reproached. But I found a man of the moſt circumſpect and ſage conduct, with the mildeſt manners, and paſſionately in love with the profeſſion of arms to which he has devoted himſelf.

I know not whether he will ſucceed in his undertaking; but he has twenty times told me he will never quit your ſervice, even could he make the moſt ſplendid and permanent fortune in France.

I was not ſufficiently informed of his family, and of this aſtoniſhing affair. He is an undoubted gentleman, the ſon of the firſt magiſtrate of the city in which he was born. I ſent for the proceedings of his proſecution. I cannot recover from my ſurpriſe, after beholding what was his fault, and what was his ſentence! He is only legally indicted for having paſſed haſtily, with his hat on his head, at the diſtance of forty paces from a proceſſion of capuchins; and for having ſung, in company with ſome other young people, a vulgar ſong, written above a hundred years ago.

It is inconceivable, in a country which calls itſelf poliſhed, and which pretends to poſſeſs ſome amiable citizens, that a youth, ſcarcely more than a child, could have been condemned to the puniſhment of parricides for a thing which

is not ſo much as a peccadillo; and for which a culprit, either at Madrid or Rome, would not have ſuffered eight days impriſonment.

This adventure is ſtill ſpoken of throughout Europe with horror; and I am as much ſurpriſed at it now as I was the firſt day on which I heard it. I would have counſelled your officer, M. de Morival, not to have debaſed himſelf ſo far as to aſk pardon of lunatic barbarians, were not this pardon neceſſary, in order for him to enjoy an inheritance of which he is in expectation.

Happen what will, he ſhall remain with me till the affair ſhall be concluded, or ſhall fail. He will profit by the permiſſion which has been granted him by your majeſty. He will return to his regiment as ſoon as poſſible, and on the day which you ſhall preſcribe.

I thank your majeſty for having deigned to ſend him to me: I am attached to him more and more; and his enthuſiaſm for your ſervice is one of the ſtrongeſt reaſons of this attachment. I can aſſure your majeſty, no man is more worthy of your protection. The compaſſion which his horrible adventure inſpires you with, will be the conſolation of his life, ſo unfortunately begun, and which will end ſo happily under your command.

My

My life is overwhelmed by the greateſt infirmities: your kindneſs ſweetens the bitter draught, and I ſhall die with ſentiments which have ever been invariable; that is, with the moſt profound reſpect for your majeſty; and I venture to add, with the moſt tender affection for your perſon.

The old Valetudinarian of Ferney.

LETTER CCCXCVI.

From the King.

Potſdam, May 15, 1774.

MORIVAL has the greateſt obligations to you. Without knowing him, his innocence alone pleaded in his behalf; and, bluſhing for the barbarity of ſentences pronounced in your country, on thoughtleſs acts which cannot deſerve the name of crimes, you have generouſly undertaken to be his defender. This is publicly to declare yourſelf the protector of the oppreſſed, and the avenger of injuſtice.

Notwithſtanding all your good will, it will be difficult, not to ſay impoſſible, to obtain a pardon for this young man. Be the progreſs of philoſophy what it will, ſtupidity and falſe zeal maintain their ground in the church; and

the name of the *infamous* —— is ſtill the watch-word of all the *poor in ſpirit*, and of all thoſe who are poſſeſſed by the phrenzy of the ſalvation of their fellow-citizens. Under a Moſt Chriſtian king, the ſubjects themſelves muſt be moſt Chriſtian; nor will Frenchmen ever be ſuffered to fail in ſaluting and kneeling before that dough which is adored as a deity.

The ſole means of obtaining favour for Morival, will be to perſuade him to go and perform penance at ſome church door, with a torch in his hand; to endure flagellation inflicted by the monks, at the foot of the high altar; and, when he leaves the church, to become a monk himſelf. Neither you nor he will, in any other manner, be able to move the clergy, who call themſelves miniſters of the God of vengeance; nor the judges, who find nothing ſo painful as to retract.

The attempt, nevertheleſs, does you honour; and poſterity will ſay that a philoſopher, who lived retired at Ferney, from his lonely retreat cried aloud againſt the iniquity of his age; that he taught truth to appear reſplendent at the foot of the throne; and that he obliged the mighty of the earth to reform abuſes. Aretinus * never did ſo much.

* Aretinus was famous for making princes and men in power dread his ſatyre. T.

Continue

Continue to protect the widow and the orphan, innocence oppreſſed, and mankind trampled in the duſt, by the feet of imperious and titled Arrogance; and be perſuaded that no perſon wiſhes you more proſperity than the philoſopher of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXCVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, June 19, 1774.

NO horſe has thrown me; I have not fallen; I have not met with the accident of your St. Paul, who was a wretched horſeman; but I have had a fever, and a general eryſipelas. I, however, have ſeen nothing extraordinary in my reveries. I have not viſited the third heaven; I have not heard unſpeakable things, ſuch as it is not lawful for the tongue of man to utter. My adventure was merely that of having the St. Anthony's fire, which any man may happen to have.

The Gazetteer of Leyden, who does not honour me with his favour, has trimmed and tricked up this tale at pleaſure. He has a warm

imagination, and it is his own fault that he does not write an epic poem.

The good Louis XV. is gone poſt to the Eternal Father. I was ſorry to hear of his departure, for he was a worthy man; his only fault was that he was a king. His ſucceſſor begins with much wiſdom, and induces the Gauls to hope for happineſs under his government. I wiſh he had treated Du Barri with more mildneſs, out of reſpect to his grandfather.

Should the monachal race influence the mind of this young man, the petits-maîtres will all carry roſaries; and thoſe who are initiated in the rites of Venus will be covered with *Agni Dei*. Some biſhop muſt then intereſt himſelf for Morival, and one of the penitents muſt plead his cauſe. It is pretended a ſtorm is brewing, which threatens philoſophers.

I tranquilly wait, in my little corner, for ſuch novelties and events as the new reign will produce; diſpoſed to admire whatever is admirable, and to make my own reflections on whatever is not; intereſted only in behalf of philoſophers, and principally in behalf of the patriarch of Ferney, of whom the philoſopher of Sans-Souci has been, is, and will remain, the ſincere admirer. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCXCVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, July, 1774.

TRUE it is, the Gobble-Gods may have much influence in France. Perhaps even the lovely daughter of her whom it is pretended you call the devout * may contribute, more than any one, to ſtrengthen this dangerous influence. I have not exalted the little imagination I have eſt to read the book of futurity currently, but I fear every thing; old men are timid. You alone will increaſe in courage when you become aged; but we muſt recollect you do not reſemble other mortals.

The perſon of whom your majeſty has been pleaſed to ſpeak, had, as you have very well obſerved, the fault of being a king. He, like many others, was little fit for his place; he was indifferent to every thing, yet eaſily piqued by perſonal trifles. He never could pardon my having quitted him for one who was more truly a king; and I never was able to perſuade myſelf that he cared whether my name were or

* The young queen of France, daughter of the devout Maria Thereſa. T.

were not on the liſt of his domeſtics. I reſpect his memory; and I wiſh you length of life exactly double to his.

Should Morival meet with the leaſt difficulty, I will immediately ſend him back to your majeſty. Our ſub-tyrants of Gaul were moſt abſurd monſters. This young man, condemned to have his hand cut off, his tongue torn out, to be broken alive on the wheel, and to be thrown into the flames, as if he had been guilty of a dozen parricides, is one of the moſt prudent, the moſt circumſpect youths I have ever known. He has nothing of the character of the young officer, except his bravery. His education had been much neglected, as is the caſe in all the ſmall towns of France. He is now ſtudying mathematics, fortification, and drawing, under a very good maſter; and I will be anſwerable to your majeſty that he will, on his return, be able to render you real ſervice; and will be highly worthy of your protection, in that infernal grand art of Lucifer, of which you are the grand maſter.

I wait an opportunity for demanding, in his behalf, all that is due from humanity, juſtice, and reaſon. His father is a gentleman, and preſident of a ſtupid town. His uncle is a knight of Malta. His brother has ſolicited the

the place of bailli of the nobility, and not one of them has dared to ſpeak for him *. Deign to conſider, ſire, how far you can be kind enough to protect, without making yourſelf a party, this brave and virtuous officer, who now belongs to you. Will you authoriſe me to ſay he is under your protection; and that, by favouring him, they will give you pleaſure? It appears to me that ſuch a turn might be of great ſervice to him, without expoſing your majeſty to the leaſt cauſe of umbrage.

I own, were I in the place of Morival, I would take good care not to aſk the leaſt favour from the Gauls: but he is obliged to this; he muſt not renounce his inheritance. Let me entreat your majeſty to pardon a degree of importunity, the motives for which you approve.

I throw myſelf at your feet, with that reſpect, attachment, and regret, which will deſcend with me to the grave.

* This is literal. I imagine the meaning muſt be, that not one of theſe relations had dared to intercede for Morival. T.

LETTER CCCXCIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, July 30, 1774.

I DO not yet venture to paſs any judgment on Louis XVI. Time is firſt neceſſary, to collect his ſucceſſive actions, and to follow his ſteps for ſome years. By being precipitate, and haſty in deciding, men are deceived.

You, who have connexions in France, may be acquainted with anecdotes, relative to the court, of which I am ignorant. Should the party of the *infamous* —— be victorious over that of philoſophy, I pity the poor Gauls; they are then in danger of being governed by ſome hypocrite in a hood or gown, who will beſtow flagellation with one hand, and baſtinado them with the crucifix in the other. Should this happen, adieu to the fine arts, and the ſublime ſciences! The ruſt of ſuperſtition will completely ruin an amiable people, born to be ſocial.

But it is not certain that Folly, ſo gloomy and ſo religious, will jingle her bells on the throne of the *Capets*.

Let the manes of Louis XV. reſt in peace. He baniſhed you from his kingdom; he made unjuſt

unjuſt war on me. We may be allowed to feel the wrongs he did us, but we ought to pardon them. The black and malignant ſpirit of vengeance does not become men, whoſe exiſtence is but momentary. We ought reciprocally to forget our follies, and be ſatisfied with the enjoyment of that happineſs which befits our nature. I will willingly contribute, if I am able, to the happineſs of poor Morival. To correct injuſtice, and to do good, are inclinations which every honeſt man ought to poſſeſs. Do not however depend on the lack of credit which I have in France, where I am wholly unacquainted. Twenty years ago, as he paſſed this way to go to Poland, I ſaw M. de Vergennes; but this is not ſufficient to be certain of his ſupport. In fine, you will act in this affair as you think will moſt contribute to the good of the young man.

I have ſeen Aufreſne perform at our theatre, where he played the parts of Couci and Mithridates. I had been told he had viſited Ferney, and I accordingly ſent for him to queſtion him concerning you. He informed me he had found you ill in bed, and voiding blood with your urine. I was terrified by this account; but he added that you had read ſome parts over with him, and I recovered from my fears.

While you continue to fulminate ſo fearfully againſt the art which you call *infernal*, you will live; nor ſhall I think your end near, till you ſhall forbear to abuſe the avengers of the wrongs of the ſtate, and the heroes who riſk their health and life to preſerve thoſe of their fellow citizens. Since, therefore, we muſt loſe you, if you do not let ſlip ſome ſarcaſms againſt warriors, I grant you the excluſive privilege of making merry at their expence. Yet figure to yourſelf an enemy ready to penetrate to the vicinity of Ferney; and would you not then regard the brave man who ſhould defend your poſſeſſions, and drive the foe from your frontiers, as your protecting deity?

I foreſee your anſwer. You will affirm ſelf-defence is juſtifiable; but that no one ought to be attacked. Make an exception, therefore, in favour of thoſe who execute the will of princes; and attribute not to them the odium of orders iſſued by their ſovereigns. When Turenne and Louvois reduced the Palatinate to aſhes, and when marſhal de Belleiſle was daring enough to propoſe making a deſert of Heſſe, I allow counſel like this to be an eternal diſgrace to the French nation; the people of which, though highly poliſhed, are ſometimes induced to commit

mit atrocious acts, worthy of the moſt barbarous tribes.

Fail not however to obſerve that Louis XV. rejected the propoſition of marſhal de Belleiſle.

But I know not where I am wandering. Is it for me to ſuggeſt reflections to the ſolitary philoſopher, who, from his cabinet, furniſhes thought for all Europe? I commend you to all thoſe thoughts which your inexhauſtible imagination will ſupply: they will no doubt inform you that it were as well to declaim againſt hail and ſnow, as againſt war; that theſe are neceſſary evils; and that to undertake impoſſibilities is not an act worthy of a philoſopher.

Men require a phyſician who can cure the fever, and not one who can write a ſatire againſt it. If you have any remedies, ſend them to us; if you have not, pity our ſufferings.

Let us ſay, with the genius Ithuriel—Though all is not well in this world, all is paſſable. It depends on ourſelves to be ſatisfied with our fate.

In the mean while, your Ruſſian heroes add victory to victory, on the banks of the Danube, that they may render the obſtinate Sultan more tractable. They read your libels, and march to battle. Your empreſs, as you call her, has ſent another fleet into the Mediterranean; and,

while

while you declaim againſt that art which you name *infernal* in your works, twenty of your letters encourage me to interfere in the troubles of the eaſt. Reconcile theſe contradictions if you can, and be kind enough to ſend me your concordance.

We have received the verſes of an author, who calls himſelf a Ruſſian, to *Ninon de l'Enclos*; as well as *Pegaſus and the Old Man*; and we are in expectation of Louis XV. in the Elyſian Fields. All theſe come from the manufactory of the patriarch of Ferney *, to whom the philoſopher of Sans-Souci wiſhes long life, cheerfulneſs, and content. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCC.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Auguſt 16, 1774.

I HAVE at length propoſed to the chancellor of France that he ſhould do every thing in his power for your officer. I have informed him that your majeſty has deigned to intereſt yourſelf in behalf of this young man, who really

* See note to Letter CCCXCIV. T.

merits

merits your protection, for his extreme good behaviour, his continual application to the duties of his profeſſion, and particularly for his unſhaken reſolution to ſerve you all his life.

Perhaps thoſe forms, which ſeem to have been invented purely to retard juſtice, may detain Morival with me ſome time longer; but he will return to Weſel the very moment your majeſty ſhall be pleaſed to appoint.

I really, ſire, am, and ever have been, of your opinion, in your letter of the 30th of July. You ſay to me—"Figure to yourſelf the enemy "ready to penetrate to the vicinity of Ferney; "and would you not regard the brave man "who ſhould defend your poſſeſſions, and drive "the foe from your frontiers, as your protect-"ing deity?"

I have ſaid, in the Epiſtle on Tactics, in indifferent verſe, what you have well expreſſed in proſe.

Eh quoi! vous vous plaignez qu'on cherche à vous défendre!
Seriez-vous bien content qu'un Goth vint mettre en cendre
Vos arbres, vos moiſſons, vos granges, vos châteaux?
Il vous faut de beaux chiens, pour garder vos troupeaux,
Il eſt, n'en doutez point, des guerres légitimes, &c *.

You

* Are you diſſatisfied with being defended? Would you have ſome Goth lay your trees, your harveſts, your granaries, and

You ſee, ſire, I think abſolutely the ſame as a certain hero of the age. Madame Deſhoulieres has ſaid—

Faute de s'approcher, et faute de s'entendre,
On eſt ſouvent brouillé pour rien *.

Beſide, the thoughts of a poor philoſopher, buried at the foot of the Alps, are not like the thoughts of the world's maſters. Theſe true or pretended philoſophers are impotent; but you heroes and monarchs, having once conceived ſome great idea, render the deſtiny of men dependent on its execution.

Whether I do or do not weep at ſeeing the country of Homer the prey of the Turks, who come from the ſhores of the Hircanian ſea; or ſhould I or ſhould I not entreat you to have the goodneſs to expel them, and ſend the equals of Alcibiades to govern in their ſtead, it will be totally indifferent; nor will the Turks know any thing of the matter. But whenever you ſhall conceive an inclination to extend your power, eaſt or weſt, the ſubject will then become ſerious, and woe to the oppoſers!

and your houſes in aſhes? Courageous dogs muſt guard your ſheep from the wolves. Doubt not but there are virtuous wars, &c.

* Not being near to, or not underſtanding each other, we often quarrel about nothing.

The Epiſtle to Ninon is really written by count Shouwaloſ, the nephew of Shouwaloſ who was the laſt lover of the empreſs Elizabeth. This nephew has been educated at Paris; add to which, he has much wit and much taſte. Fifty years ago, there was little expectation that a Ruſſian would write French poetry ſo well; but he has been anticipated by a king of the North, who has ſet him great examples.

I do not know the ſatire intitled, Louis XV. in the Elyſian Fields; nor do I think any ſuch ſatire exiſts.

A collection of Letters, by the late lord Cheſterfield, has appeared; they were written to a natural ſon, whom he loved as well as madame de Sévigné loved her daughter.

He has often mentioned you in theſe letters, and has done you that juſtice which will be done you by poſterity.

The ſuffrage of lord Cheſterfield is of great weight; not only becauſe he was of a nation the people of which trouble themſelves but little with flattering kings; but becauſe, of all the Engliſh, he perhaps has written with the moſt taſte. His admiration of you cannot be ſuſpected; he little imagined that his Letters would be printed after his own death and that of his baſtard. They are tranſlated into French in Holland,

and

and your majeſty will ſoon ſee them; in them you will read the thoughts of the only Engliſhman who has recommended the art of pleaſing as the firſt duty of life.

I never can forget that my greateſt paſſion was that of pleaſing you; at preſent it is that of not diſpleaſing you. All things decline with age; the more we are convinced of our poverty, the more modeſt we are.

Your old Admirer.

LETTER CCCCI.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 19, 1774.

THE chancellor of France, according to the public papers, is diſmiſſed; and you muſt have recourſe to ſome other protector, if you wiſh to ſerve Morival. It is ſaid the old parliament will be recalled; but I do not concern myſelf with parliaments: and I depend on the prudence of the Sixteenth Louis, who knows better than I do how a Louis ought to act.

I do juſtice to your excellent verſes on Tactics, as to elegant abuſe, which, according to you, is praiſe. With reſpect to what you add on war,

I can

I can aſſure you no perſon wiſhes for it in Europe; and if you can rely on the teſtimony of your empreſs of Ruſſia, and on that of the empreſs-queen, they will both atteſt that, had it not been for me, there would have been a general conflagration in Europe, and even two *. I have acted the office of capuchin, and have extinguiſhed the flames.

Enough at this time of the affairs of Poland. I could plead that cauſe before all the tribunals on earth, certain of being victorious. I keep ſilence however on events ſo recent, of which to ſpeak would be indiſcretion.

I received your letter at my return from Sileſia, where I ſaw count Hoditz, formerly ſo gay, at preſent gloomy and melancholy. He cannot forgive nature for the infirmities with which he is incommoded, and which are the conſequence of age. I addreſſed the incloſed epiſtle to him, which you may, if you pleaſe, caſt an eye over. It is not equal to that of Ninon, over which I ſtrongly ſuſpect the poliſhing tool of Voltaire has paſſed. I have met with many Ruſſians, but

* *Et même deux.*"—The editions concur in this reading; though the ſoleciſm, of two *general* conflagrations, leads me to ſuſpect an error of the preſs; and that it ought to be, *et même d'eux*, that is, occaſioned by themſelves; or, of their own kindling. T.

with none who thus expreſs themſelves, or who had the ſportive turns with which this Epiſtle is enlivened.

You are ſatisfied, you ſay, not to be hated. I cannot forbear to love you, in deſpite of all your little infidelities. When you are dead, no one can replace you; there will be an end to the belles lettres in France. My laſt paſſion will be that of literature; the decline of which, be it from a want of genius, or a corrupt taſte which appears to prevail, I behold with grief. Some few ages hence, the good authors of the age of Louis XIV. will be tranſlated, as are thoſe of the times of Pericles and Auguſtus. I think myſelf fortunate to have come into the world at a period when I could enjoy thoſe authors who have rendered this fine age ſo famous. Our deſcendants will be born with leſs enthuſiaſm for ſuch maſterpieces of the human mind, becauſe the time of effervescence will be gone by. The mind limits itſelf to the firſt progreſs, which is followed by ſatiety, and the love of novelty, good or bad.

Live therefore as long as you can; and on your bent ſhoulders bear, like another Atlas, the honour of letters, and of the human mind. Such are the prayers which the philoſopher of Sans-Souci makes, for the patriarch of Ferney.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCII.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 8, 1774.

THE negociations of the peace of Weſtphalia were not more troubleſome to Claude d'Avaux, count of Meſmes, and to the famous Oxenſtiern, than the trouble of ſoliciting the pardon of Jacques-Marie Bertrand D'Etallonde, at the court of France, has been to you. Your negociations have encountered all poſſible impediments. Here have we a chancellor without a chancery-court, who is rendered uſeleſs to you. A new comer perhaps may not know you; and his favour muſt be ſolicited by ſome flattering verſes, before the affair of Jacques-Marie can be begun; after which a certificate muſt be produced, which you aſk from me, and which is not written in the chancery ſtyle.

It is pretended that an atteſtation by the officer-general, of the regiment in which he ſerves, is ſufficient; and that princes ought not to condeſcend to aſk pardon of other princes, in behalf of their ſervants; or, if they interfere, it muſt be officially. Such is what is ſaid.

For my part, I am not accuſtomed to the

chancery ſtyle; nor am I profoundly learned in punctilio. I interfere no further than to ſend the atteſtation of the general to M. d'Alembert, and to write to my ambaſſador at Paris, who will ſpeak a word in favour of the young man to the new chancellor.

Should ancient barbarous cuſtoms prevail againſt the good intentions of Marie-François Arouet Voltaire, and his aſſociate M. de Sans-Souci, we muſt take comfort; for this will be no good reaſon why we ſhould declare war againſt France. The proverb ſays—"Live and let live:" and thus thinks your empreſs, who is ſatisfied with having humbled the Porte. She has too much dignity to wiſh to cruſh her enemies.

Greece muſt do the beſt it can. The ancient Greeks have riſen from the dead in France. You derive your origin from the colony of Marſeilles; and this new country of the arts rewards us for that which is no more.

It is the fate of human affairs to change. Greece and Egypt are become barbarous, in their turn; but France, England, and Germany, which begin to be enlightened, afford a good compenſation for Peloponneſus. The marſhes of Rome have overflowed the gardens of Lucullus. Perhaps, ſome ages hence, ſcience muſt be

be learnt from the Ruſſians. Every thing is poſſible, and that which is not may be.

My prayers are that the Being of beings ſhould prolong the life of your charitable heart; and that he ſhould preſerve you for the conſolation of the unfortunate, and for the ſatisfaction of the humble philoſopher of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 20, 1774.

YOU poets have the happy gift
Great things from ſmall to raiſe;
Deformity you beauteous make
By apt and artful praiſe.

Horatian banquets I beſtow
Of wit and flowing ſenſe;
So ſays Voltaire, then gen'rous bears
Himſelf the whole expence.

In war and rhyme an invalid,
My camp I ought to keep;
Nor with Racine pretend to tilt,
Nor climb Parnaſſian ſteep.

To heaven in gratitude I give
My thanks, that I was born

In that bleſt age which fate decreed
Your writings ſhould adorn.

To you this age would temples build,
If now, as heretofore
In Greece and Rome, the world were prone
High genius to adore.

But ah! Degenerate! We forget
Genius ſhall reſt ſupine
In that lamented, honour'd tomb,
Which ſome time muſt be thine.

You have ſpoken of the art of kings, and have equitably judged the dead. To judge the living is more difficult, becauſe we do not know all circumſtances; and a ſingle one unknown may oblige us to applaud that which we had previouſly condemned. Louis XIV. was cenſured, during his life, for having undertaken the war of the ſucceſſion: at preſent the world does him juſtice, and every impartial man muſt avow that it would have been cowardice in him not to have accepted the will of the king of Spain. All men are guilty of errors, conſequently princes are thus guilty. But the true ſage of the ſtoics, and the perfect prince, have neither of them ever yet exiſted, nor ever will exiſt.

Princes like Charles the Raſh, Louis XI. Alexander VI. and Ludovicus Sforza, are the

ſcourges of their people, and of the world. Such monarchs are not at preſent to be found in our Europe. We have two mad kings, that merit the ſtrait waiſtcoat, and numerous feeble ſovereigns; but none of thoſe monſters that lived in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Imbecillity is an incorrigible defect; of this nature muſt be accuſed, and not the man. I will allow that harm may be done through imbecillity: but, in all countries where the throne is hereditary, it is a neceſſary conſequence that ſuch kind of people ſhould be at the head of nations; becauſe no family whatever has furniſhed an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of great men. Believe me, none of the eſtabliſhments of man will ever attain perfection. We muſt be ſatisfied with an *almoſt*, and not violently declaim againſt abuſes that cannot be remedied.

I come now to your Morival. I have charged my ambaſſador in France to intercede in his behalf, without much depending on any influence I may have at that court. Atteſtations of regular conduct in a petitioner may be produced in judicial pleadings; but they would be miſplaced in negociations, in which it is always rationally ſuppoſed that the ſovereign, who orders his miniſter to act, will never intercede in behalf of an unworthy man. However, to comply

with your requeſt, I have ſent a ſhort atteſtation, ſigned by the governor of Weſel, to D'Alembert, who may make whatever uſe of it ſhall be thought beſt.

I am not aſtoniſhed at your intermitting pulſe: after a long life, the veins begin to oſſify; and time is neceſſary before this can extend to the *vena cava*, by which we gain a reſpite of a few years. You will ſtill live, and perhaps to bury me. Bodies that, like mine, have been overcome by fatigue, do not afford the ſame reſiſtance as thoſe that, by a regular life, have been ſpared and preſerved. This is the leaſt of my troubles; for, the moment the machine ſhall ſtop, whether it have exiſted ſix centuries or ſix days is a thing of no conſequence. It is of much more importance to have lived well, and not to have any conſiderable reproach with which to tax ourſelves.

Such is my confeſſion; and I flatter myſelf the patriarch of Ferney will grant me abſolution *in articulo mortis*. To him I wiſh long life, health, and proſperity; and, for my own pleaſure, that his vein may be inexhauſtible. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCCCIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, November 17, 1774.

SOME trifling warning meſſengers, which nature occaſionally ſends to people of eighty-one, have not permitted me to thank you ſooner for your charming letter, which contains ſome of the ſweeteſt lines you have ever written to me. There is neither king nor man who reſembles you. I certainly am not able to return you verſe for verſe.

Ah! Wherefore treat me thus, too cruel Muſe?
High and befitting thoughts, wherewith t' admire
Thy fav'rite ſon, thou giv'ſt; then why refuſe,
When I would thought for thought return, thy ſacred fire?

But I can at leaſt aſſure your majeſty that my heart is penetrated by the kindneſs which you deign to teſtify for our poor Morival. I wiſh him to draw a plan of the ſnowy country which you have permitted him to inhabit. Your majeſty will ſee the progreſs he has made, in a very ſhort time, in an art neceſſary to good officers; an art ſeldom underſtood, and of which he had not the ſlighteſt knowledge. You

would be affected by his gratitude, and the zeal with which he dedicates his time to your ſervice. His extreme good behaviour aſtoniſhes me. There is an intention to reviſe his ſentence, which was only paſſed on him for contumacy; which appears to me more proper and more dignified than to aſk pardon: for, in fine, pardon ſuppoſes guilt, and guilty he certainly is not: nothing has been proved againſt him. This requires time, and perhaps I ſhall die before the affair will be finiſhed; but I have bequeathed this unfortunate man to M. d'Alembert, who will be more ſucceſsful than I ſhould have been.

I venture to think, it will perhaps be unworthy of your dignity that one of your officers ſhould bear the ſtigma of condemnation, to which the world always annexes ſome humiliating ideas, however unjuſt ſuch condemnation may be. To protect a youth ſo eſtimable, and ſo unfortunate, is truly one of your great actions. At once you ſuccour innocence and reaſon. You teach the Gauls to deteſt fanaticiſm; as you have taught them the trade of war, ſuppoſing them to have learnt this trade. Every kind of glory is yours; and to protect innocence, at the diſtance of three hundred leagues, is of no trifling ſpecies.

Deign,

Deign, ſire, to accept the reſpect, gratitude, and attachment, of an old man, who will expire with theſe ſentiments.

LETTER CCCCV.

From the King.

Potſdam, November 18, 1774.

DO not talk to me of Elyſium. Since Louis XV. is there, there let him be. You would meet with none but people envious of your fame—Homer, Virgil, Sophocles, Euripides, Thucydides, Demoſthenes, and Cicero; all of whom would ſee you arrive with vexation. Whereas, by remaining among us, you may preſerve a place which no one will diſpute with you, and which is by right your due. A man who has rendered himſelf immortal is not ſubjected to the condition of the reſt of men; you have, for this reaſon, acquired an excluſive privilege.

However, as I perceive you are very much intereſted in the deſtiny of this poor D'Etallonde, I ſend you a letter from Paris, which affords ſome hopes. You will there ſee the terms in which the keeper of the ſeals expreſſes himſelf;

ſelf; and will at the ſame time perceive that the count de Vergennes is willing to aid the juſtification of innocence. The affair will be purſued by M. von Goltz, and I begin to hope not in vain: I hope that Voltaire, the promoter of this worthy work, will receive my thanks, and thoſe of D'Etallonde.

Did I not think you immortal, I ſhould willingly conſent that D'Etallonde ſhould continue, till the affair ſhall be ended, with your niece; but I hope you will live to return him to me.

I was afflicted at your letter. I cannot reconcile myſelf to your total loſs; and it ſeems to me that ſomething would be wanting to our Europe, were it deprived of Voltaire.

Let not the inequality of your pulſe diſturb you. I mentioned the circumſtance to a famous Engliſh phyſician, who is at preſent here. He treats it as a trifle, and ſays you may yet live long. As my wiſhes agree with his aſſertions, do not deprive me of this hope, which was the laſt ingredient in Pandora's box.

In theſe ſentiments does the philoſopher of Sans-Souci offer up a hundred prayers to Apollo, and to his ſon Eſculapius, for the preſervation of the patriarch of Ferney.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, December 7, 1774.

YOU do an action worthy of yourſelf, by deigning to protect your officer D'Etallonde; of which protection I have unceaſing reaſon to aſſure your majeſty he is well worthy. His education had been much neglected by his father, a ſtupid unfeeling provincial preſident, who deſtined his ſon for the prieſthood. He did not ſo much as underſtand arithmetic when he came here; he is now maſter of practical geometry, and of fortification.

I take the liberty to ſend your majeſty, by the flying waggons, in a long tin box, the plans which he has drawn of all the countries which lie between the Alps and Mount Jura, coaſting the Lake of Geneva. I have even added a plan of the gardens of Ferney, intended only to ſhew with what facility and ſurpriſing neatneſs he draws. I venture to pledge myſelf he will be one of the beſt engineers in your army. His ambition is to enjoy the happineſs of living and dying in your ſervice. He neither has nor

ever will have any other country than Pruſſia, or maſter than your majeſty. He with reaſon regards you as his benefactor, and, I am daring enough to add, as his father.

He writes to-day to your ambaſſador; but he waits for the papers of his abominable proſecution, without which he can do nothing. He knows leſs than any one what has been done during his abſence; for he left the country the firſt moment the affair began to be enquired into. All he knows is, it was the conſequence of provincial cabal, and family hatred. One of his infamous judges, who died two years ago, cauſed himſelf to be dragged before his death to the houſe of an old gentleman, the uncle of D'Etallonde, and a knight of the order of St. Louis, of whom he publicly aſked pardon for his execrable injuſtice.

But his repentance was inſufficient; the papers of the proſecution are neceſſary. We have been waiting for them four months. Nothing is more eaſy than to be ſentenced to death, and nothing more difficult than to gain information why ſuch ſentence had been paſſed. Such is our barbarous juriſprudence! The preſent proſecution is more odious even than that of the family of Calas.

Do you recollect, ſire, a ſhort charming poem,

which you deigned to ſend me above fifteen years ago, in which you ſo well painted—

Ce peuple ſot et volage,
Auſſi vaillant au pillage
Que lâche dans les combats *.

You know that this nation of Gauls has at preſent for its Vegetius one of your ſubaltern officers †, of whom it is ſaid you had no high opinion, and who is making an entire change in the tactics of France: ſo that our ſoldiers no longer know what they are doing. Europe is not now in the age of Condé and of Turenne, but in that of Frederic. If you ſhould ever by chance beſiege Abbeville, I will be anſwerable that D'Etallonde will do you good ſervice.

My health is terribly on the decline. I greatly fear I ſhall not live long enough to ſee an end to his affair: but it will conclude very well without me; your name will be ſufficient; and I ſhall have no other regret than that of not dying with your majeſty.

I throw myſelf at your feet, with the moſt profound reſpect, and the moſt tender gratitude.

* This fooliſh flighty people, as valiant in pillage as they are cowardly in battle.

† The Baron von Pirſch.

LET-

LETTER CCCCVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 10, 1774.

MISTAKE not; you will not die ſo ſoon. You imagine that which is but the conſequence of age to be the meſſenger of death. Death indeed will come at laſt; but the fire divine which Prometheus ſtole from heaven, and with which you abound, will yet long ſuſtain and preſerve you.

"Your ſermons, my lord," ſaid Gil Blas to the archbiſhop of Toledo, "muſt begin to be "dull before we can forebode your decay." Hitherto your ſermons are not dull: I have lately read two of them, one to the biſhop of Senez, the other to the abbé Sabathier, which indicate vigour and ſtrength of mind. This mind appertains to the nervous ſyſtem, and to the fineneſs of the juices which are diſtilled and prepared for the brain; and, while this diſtillation continues to be well performed, the machine is not threatened with ruin.

You will live and ſee the concluſion of the ſuit of Morival. I no doubt ought to have thought ſooner of him; but I have been prevented

vented by the multitude and diverſity of my affairs. I am under an obligation to you, for having reminded me. Perhaps this ten years delay will not injure our ſolicitations: we may find imaginations leſs heated, and conſequently more reaſonable. Perhaps too there may be ſome good ſouls who will bluſh at ſuch an example of barbarity in the eighteenth century; and who will endeavour to waſh out this bloody ſpot, by freeing the companion of the unfortunate La Barre from perſecution.

Of this good action you will be the author. I ever moſt willingly aſſociate with thoſe who furniſh me with an opportunity of ſupporting innocence, and of delivering the oppreſſed. To act thus within his own dominions, is the duty of every ſovereign; and he may, according to circumſtances, act in the ſame manner in other countries; eſpecially if he regulate his ſteps by the rules of prudence.

The crime of having broken a crucifix, and ſung libertine ſongs, is not among us heretics the loſs of reputation, to an officer who, in other reſpects, may be found to be a man of merit. Neither can the ſentences of parliaments be injurious to him; for nothing but real crimes defame the man, and not that puniſhment which is in itſelf unjuſt. Whether the old parliament

reſtored

reſtored will liſten to the inſinuations of the count de Vergennes is yet to be known.

This miniſter, who long reſided in foreign countries, heard the public cries of Europe, occaſioned by the maſſacre of La Barre. He bluſhed while he heard, and will endeavour to repair whatever is capable of reparation. But perhaps the parliament will not be ductile, which is the reaſon I cannot yet anſwer for any thing.

Take good care of your health, during the ſevere cold which begins to be felt; and doubt not but that the philoſopher of Sans-Souci is more intereſted than any one, in the preſervation of the patriarch of Ferney. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, December 13, 1774.

WHILE your officer at Ferney draws mountains and plans of fortification, the old man of Ferney throws himſelf at your feet, and ſends your majeſty the charges made againſt this officer in a criminal ſuit, as abſurd as it

was

was execrable, under which he was profecuted. This profecution is much more atrocious than that againſt the family of Calas, and renders the nation more odious; for the infamous judges of Calas might at leaſt plead, in their own behalf, that they were deceived, and that they imagined they were avenging violated nature: but the apes in black gowns, who have dared to condemn D'Etallonde without hearing him, and without even hearing the ſuit, were only deſirous of avenging the moſt ſtupid of ſuperſtitions, and have acted as contrary to law as to common ſenſe.

The word *religion*, which has been employed for the condemnation of innocence to the moſt horrible of deaths, made a great impreſſion on the mind of the late king of France. He imagined that, by this ſingle word, he attached the clergy to himſelf; and, at the death of the dauphin his ſon, he even wrote a circular letter, or ſuch a letter was written in his name, in which he ſaid that he only loved his ſon becauſe he was very religious. Such was the cauſe of the death of the chevalier La Barre, and of the condemnation of your officer D'Etallonde, who is yours eternally; and be perſuaded he is worthy of ſo being.

I have no doubt but your ambaſſador at

Paris continues forcibly to recommend him; and I requeſt it of you as a favour that you would not ſuffer his zeal to cool on this affair, whenever you write to him. You are reſpected; and they will attend to an officer who appertains to you, and who has no other king than your majeſty.

I do not believe they are very ſincerely your friends; but it is to be preſumed they will ſome day have much need ſo to be. Beſide that I know no country in the world in which your name is not moſt potent. To me it is ſacred, and I ſhall expire pronouncing it.

I dare flatter myſelf your majeſty will be pleaſed to ſuffer D'Etallonde Morival to remain with me, till the reſpect which is your due may bring this dreadful affair to a happy termination.

LETTER CCCCIX.

From the King.

Berlin, December 28, 1774.

NON, vous ne mourrez point; je n'y puis conſentir *.

You ſhall live, and ſee the end of the ſuit of D'Etallonde; but I will not warrant that it ſhall

* You ſhall not die; to this I'll ne'er conſent.

be reviſed. If however the old parliament wiſh not to diſhonour its own return, it ought to pronounce in favour of innocence; and D'Etallonde will to you be doubly indebted, for having reſcued his name from diſhonour, and recovered his fortune; not to mention that you have furniſhed him with the means of inſtruction, by which he may form and improve his talents.

I thank you for the drawings which you have ſent me, eſpecially for that of your garden, which gives me an idea of the places which your fine genius has rendered famous, and which you inhabit.

You mention a young man * to me who was a page of my court, and who quitted my ſervice to go to France; where, that he might meet protection, I believe he married one of the relations of Du Barri. Had not Louis XV. died, he might have acted a ſubaltern part in the kingdom; but at preſent he has loſt much. He is exceedingly giddy, and I doubt of his ultimate ſucceſs. Poſſeſſed of a good doſe of effrontery, he announced himſelf as a man of talents; his word was immediately taken: but ſome fifteen ſummers muſt paſs away before

* The baron von Pirſch.

he will come to maturity; perhaps he may then be ſomething.

The ages, or the nations, that produce ſuch men as Turenne, Condé, Colbert, Boſſuet, Bayle, and Corneille, are but periodical. Such were thoſe of Pericles, Cicero, and Louis XIV. It is neceſſary that combining circumſtances ſhould form minds to ſuch a ſtate of effervescence: it ſeems to be an effort of nature, who takes her reſt, after having unexpectedly been prodigal in her fruitful abundance. No ſovereign can contribute to the producing of ſo ſplendid an epocha. Nature muſt have ſtationed men of genius in ſuch a manner, that thoſe by whom they are countenanced may employ them in the preciſe ſtations which they ought to fill in this world; for genius, improperly placed, often reſembles ſeed ſmothered and unproductive.

The worſhip of Plutus, in all countries, is ſuperior to that of Minerva; we muſt expect to find full purſes and empty heads. Honeſt mediocrity is moſt ſuitable to ſtates; riches introduce effeminacy and corruption. Not that a republic like that of Sparta could now exiſt; but, by preſerving a juſt medium between poverty and exceſs, the national character continues to be maſculine, proper for application and labour,

labour, and is inclined to all that can elevate the ſoul. Great wealth produces the contraſt of avarice and diſſipation.

Perhaps you will compare me to the fox of La Fontaine, that affirmed the grapes he could not reach were ſour. But not ſo; my reflections are furniſhed by my knowledge of hiſtory, and my own experience. You will object that the Engliſh are opulent, and that they have produced great men. This I allow: but theſe iſlanders have in general a character different from that of the people of the Continent; and Engliſh manners are leſs effeminate than thoſe of other European nations. Their government alſo differs from ours, and the whole is productive of different combinations. Not to mention that theſe people, being mariners from neceſſity, muſt neceſſarily have manners more ſevere than thoſe which are ſeen among us terreſtrial animals.

Do not be aſtoniſhed at the turn of this letter; age brings meditation, which the trade I follow obliges me to extend as much as I poſſibly can.

This meditation however induces me to pray for your well being. You are the laſt ſcion of the age of Louis XIV.; and, ſhould we loſe you, not one great man of literature would remain in

all Europe. I wiſh you ſhould bury me; for after death *nihil eſt*.

With theſe ſentiments the philoſopher of Sans-Souci ſalutes the patriarch of Ferney. *Vale*.

FREDERIC.

I have received the deſigns of D'Etallonde, and have examined Ferney with as much care as I ſhould have employed in examining Charlottenburg; and that ſolely becauſe you are its inhabitant.

LETTER CCCCX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, January 2, 1775.

AS a new-year's gift, I lay at your majeſty's feet a plan of a citadel, invented and drawn by D'Etallonde Morival, who had never learnt to draw till he came here. His progreſs partakes of the marvellous, and conſequently his talents ought only to be employed in your ſervice. He has learnt as much of mathematics as is neceſſary to make himſelf uſeful; all the reſt is ridiculous empiriciſm, the admiration of the ignorant. The ſquaring of the circle

circle is of no ſervice. The idea of going inaccurately to meaſure a degree of the meridian, to learn whether the pole be lengthened by four or five degrees, is ſo romantic, that the different admeaſurements have all varied. A good engineer is of more worth than all the calculators of difficult fooleries. I am near my end, and I tell you what is truth. Alas! you too well know, and Europe knows it likewiſe, what that thing was called a chimerical and calumniating mathematician. I ſhall die with an aching heart, remembering the evil he did me in driving me from your preſence.

Suffer me at leaſt to expire in conſolation, remembering the kindneſs with which you have treated D'Etallonde Morival. He is a gentleman full of honour and prudence, who did not bluſh at being a common ſoldier for three years, who was made an officer by your majeſty, who is your own work, and who conſecrates his life to you. He ſpeaks German as if he were a native of your ſtates; he is aſſiduous, diſcreet, and induſtrious; he writes well, and with ſpeed; and may ſerve you as a ſecretary, ſhould you want one. Permit him to labour, in my houſe, to render himſelf worthy of ſerving you, till his ſuit ſhall be decided, whether I ſhould live or die. He writes in a good ſtyle, has acquired

ſome literature, and is proper for any thing. Neither I, M. d'Alembert, nor any of my friends, wiſh to accept a pardon for this brave gentleman. To be pardoned is too diſgraceful.

Deign, ſire, to prolong his furlough; he will depart at the moment you ſhall command: your protection, and your favours, will be the condemnation of his aſſaſſins. He would have been protected by the great Julian; he would have been aſſaſſinated by Cyril, and Gregory of Nanzianzen. Why did not you undertake that which was undertaken by Julian? By you it would have been accompliſhed. Be you however the refuge and the hope of innocence. I wiſh your length of life may equal that of the firſt Egyptian kings, than whom your name is more illuſtrious.

LETTER CCCCXI.

From the King.

Berlin, January 5, 1775.

EVERY thing which relates to the ſuit of D'Etallonde has been ſent to Paris. I doubt however whether your recalled parliament will obey, in order to juſtify innocence. The obſti-

nacy

nacy of a great body, and of a hundred uſeleſs forms, will occaſion D'Etallonde to remain oppreſſed; nor would I ſwear, were he in France, that they would not roaſt him by a ſlow fire.

It was very natural that Louis XV. ſhould have religious weakneſſes: he was educated by prieſts in the moſt ſtupid ſuperſtition, and was ſurrounded, all his life, by perſons either bigotted or too good courtiers to ſhock his prejudices. How often has he been told—"God has placed "you on the throne, ſire, to be the protector "of the church. The ſword which he has put "into your hand is for her defence; and you "bear the name of Moſt Chriſtian, that you "may be the ſcourge of hereſy and incredulity. "The church is the true ſupport of the throne; "her prieſts are the divine inſtruments who "preach ſubmiſſion to the people; their con-"ſciences are in their keeping: and you are "more the maſter of your ſubjects by their "voices than by your armies, &c."

Let ſuch diſcourſe be often repeated to a man who leads a life of diſſipation, and who does not employ a ſingle moment in reflecting, and it will be believed, and he will act accordingly. This was the caſe of Louis XV. I pity him, but do not condemn. Poor D'Etallonde is hence a ſuf-

a ſufferer, and I foreſee that I ſhall be his only refuge.

Your buſt has been made at the porcelain manufactory. I well know that it deſerves to be formed of leſs periſhable materials: you will however perceive, by the eagerneſs ſhewn to poſſeſs your reſemblance, how great is the extent of your reputation. I ſend you one of theſe buſts, which reſembled you formerly, and perhaps does ſo ſtill.

I repeat—Live; take care of your old age; and, though life ſhould be indifferent to you, at leaſt remember that it is not ſo to the philoſopher of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, January, 1775.

I HAVE this moment received the buſt of the old man in porcelain; and when I ſaw the inſcription, of which I am ſo unworthy, I exclaimed—

While ſtars and ribbands, meant for ſhow,
Both France and England's kings beſtow,

A king

A king there is who more intends,
And richer, nobler preſents ſends.
By deed of gift, from him I gain
A diſtrict in his own domain;
And this domain is, learn from me,
The land of immortality.

A-propos of immortality—A magnificent edition has been printed of the life of one of your admirers *, who marched in one of the paths of that glory to which you have diſcovered every road. There is a whole volume of plans of battles, encampments, and marches; and of all the actions in which he was concerned from twelve years of age. The maps are very exact, and well drawn. Though, in quality of poltroon, I moſt cordially deteſt war, I nevertheleſs own I paſſionately wiſh your majeſty would permit your battles to be drawn. I venture to affirm no perſon would be more capable of the taſk than D'Etallonde Morival. The celerity, preciſion, and goodneſs of his drawings are really aſtoniſhing: it ſhould ſeem as if he had ſtudied fortification twenty years.

Since I have begun to ſpeak of him, ſire, I ſhall continue the ſame freedom. My heart is penetrated by the kindneſs with which you honour him; and the moment approaches when

* Marſhal Saxe.

he

he hopes this kindneſs will be ſerviceable. But the leave of abſence, which your majeſty has granted him, will expire in the month of March; and he will indubitably abandon his hopes, to fly to his duty. Such is his deſign. I entreat you for him, and in deſpite of him, that you would kindly grant us ſix months longer. I dare not repeat my requeſt that you would honour him with the title of Engineer, and of Lieutenant, or of Captain. All I know is, that a victim of the prieſthood might be immolated, and that a man belonging to you will be reſpected *. You are not ſatisfied with beſtowing immortality, you grant ſafeguards in the preſent life. I ſhall ſpend the remainder of mine in thanking, and again reading, Marcus-Aurelius-Julian-Frederic, the hero of war and of philoſophy.

The old Valetudinarian of Ferney.

* This is dark, but it is the author. The ſenſe perhaps is—A man perſecuted by the prieſthood would be in danger of death, but not if he were protected by you. T.

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LETTER CCCCXIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, January 27, 1775.

I WAS prepared for any accident, except that of receiving with your letter a plan of an art which is worthy of cannibals and anthropophagi. Thinking of Morival, I think of Alexander; the latter was the diſciple of Ariſtotle, as the former is of Voltaire: and although, in the ſchools of the greateſt philoſophers, they both have quitted Urania for Bellona, it is ſtill to be hoped that Morival will not have the ſame exceſſive thirſt of conqueſt as had his predeceſſor Alexander.

That officer may remain with you as long as you ſhall think it neceſſary for his intereſt; though, the country conſidered, his ſuit may not be ended within a year. I am officially told that important forms require delay; and that no one can have the pleaſure of loſing a cauſe before the parliament of Paris, except by being patient. I hear all theſe fine things with aſtoniſhment, and without comprehending a word of the matter.

You prefer practical geometry to fluxions with good reaſon. The one is uſeful and neceſſary;

the other is but a luxury of the mind. Not but that theſe ſublime abſtractions do honour to the human underſtanding. The men of genius by whom they are cultivated ſeem to me to rid themſelves of matter as much as is in their power, and to riſe to regions ſuperior to ſenſe. I honour genius, let its root be what it will; and, though a mathematician be a ſage whoſe language I do not underſtand, I pity my own ignorance, and do not eſteem him the leſs.

Maupertuis, whom you ſtill hate, had good qualities; his mind was a mind of worth; he had talents and much knowledge. I allow he was haſty, and this was the cauſe of your quarrel. I know not by what fatality it happens that two Frenchmen, in a foreign country, are never friends. Millions endure each other in their own nation; but all is changed the moment they have paſſed the Pyrenees, the Rhine, or the Alps. In fine, it is high time to forget faults, when thoſe by whom they were committed no longer exiſt. You will never ſee Maupertuis more, till you come to the valley of Jehoſophat; and nothing preſſes you to undertake the journey.

Continue long to enjoy your glory in this world, where you are triumphant over rivalſhip and envy. Let your ſetting ſun beam forth

thoſe

thoſe rays of good taſte and genius that appertain to the fine age of Louis XIV. to which you partly belong, and which rays you alone can tranſmit: let them ſhine on literature, and ſuffer it not to degenerate. Nay, if poſſible, endeavour to awaken the love of learning and the belles lettres, which ſeem to me to be out of faſhion, and declining.

This is what I ſtill expect from you. In length of life you will ſurpaſs Fontenelle, for you have too much mind to be in any haſte to die. We have the lord Marſhal here, who is eighty-five years of age; and, his legs excepted, he is as gay as a youth. Neither does our Pölnitz cede the palm to him; according to his own arithmetic the baron has ſtill ten long years to live. Why ſhould not the author of the Henriade, Merope, Semiramis, &c. &c. be as long-lived as either? Much oil in the lamp, and it will not ſoon go out. And who has more oil than yourſelf? To tell you a ſecret, it has been revealed to me by Apollo that we ſhall ſtill long preſerve you. I put up my humble prayer to him, and addreſſed him thus: Oh thou only God to whom I pray, ſtill grant thy ſon at Ferney many years of exiſtence, for the advantage of letters, and the ſatisfaction of the hermit of Sans-Souci! *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, January 29, 1775.

I HAVE this moment received the charming letter of the 2d of December with which your majeſty has honoured me, and which reſtores my ſtrength, and induces me to forget all the afflictions that have often been almoſt more than I could ſupport. I ſhall certainly make no compariſon between you and the emperor Kienlong, though he be the great-grandſon of a celeſtial virgin, the ſiſter of God. I have taken the liberty to divert myſelf a little with his genealogy, which is much more common than it is ſuppoſed to be. I have written theſe trifles purely to diſpel my pains; and, if they can but amuſe your majeſty for a moment, I have not loſt my labour. The ancient religion of the Bramins is evidently the origin of Chriſtianity. Of this you will be convinced, ſhould you deign to read the letter on India, which perhaps may further amuſe your philoſophic mind. All that I have ſaid, of the Bramins, is literally taken from authentic writings, with which Mr. Paw is better acquainted than I am.

I am. I am abſolutely of his opinion, relative to thoſe who believe they are better acquainted with China than the very learned and the very ſenſible father Parennin, who lived thirty years at Pekin. I muſt add, theſe letters are publiſhed under the name of a young Benedictin, who wiſhes to become ſomewhat of a philoſopher, and who addreſſes himſelf to M. Paw as his maſter, in deſpite of St. Benedict and St. Idulphus.

It is true, ſire, that I have much more reſpect for your ſeventy-ſix thouſand meadow-days, and your ſeven thouſand cows, which owe their exiſtence to you *, than I have for the theological romances of the Chineſe and of the Indians. But the emperor Kienlong clears and cultivates the earth likewiſe: nay, it is even pretended that he is better acquainted with the plough than with the lyre. You are certainly the only king on this globe who is ſupereminent in every art.

You would reſemble Apollo as much as one pea reſembles another, had not you ſo long choſen a different patron for your ſaint, named Mars; for Apollo, like you, built palaces, cul-

* The alluſion here muſt, as I imagine, be to the marſhes drained, the waſte lands colonized, and the agricultural improvements of the king. T.

tivated meadows, and was the God of muſic and of poetry. You too, like him, are a phyſician, for your majeſty extends your goodneſs ſo far as to intend to ſend me a bottle of the balſam of Mecca, which is a ſovereign remedy for a defluxion on the lungs, by which my niece is attacked, and for extreme weakneſs like mine. Your majeſty is not only the delight of my life, but this life is prolonged by you: the remainder of it ought to be dedicated to you.

I thank you for the Ammianus Marcellinus, the notes of which I have been told are very inſtructive. This Ammianus was a ſuperſtitious perſon, who believed in demons of the air, and ſorcerers, as every body believed in his times, as the Gauls continued to believe in the age of Louis XIV. and as the Poles ſtill believe more firmly than ever; for it is ſaid they have lately burnt ſeven poor old women, who were accuſed of having occaſioned the harveſt to fail by their incantations.

I know not, ſire, whether I have not ſtripped myſelf of my marquiſate, and laid my titles at your feet. I have refuſed to accept any recompence, for the trifling labour I have beſtowed on the ſmall country which I have made my own.

I am now eighty-two, and have no children; the

the raiſing of an eſtate to a marquiſate requires cares ſuperior to my ſtrength. I have no wiſh for any honours, except thoſe of being ever protected by Frederic the Great, to whom I am attached with the moſt profound reſpect, and ſo ſhall remain to my laſt breath.

LETTER CCCCXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, February 4, 1775.

WHILE D'Etallonde Morival has built citadels on paper for you, and beſieged them; while he has been drawing hills, dales, and lakes, the old Valetudinarian of Ferney has employed himſelf in writing a tragedy, which he takes the liberty to lay at your majeſty's feet. He entreats you would not read it, for it is not worth the trouble. Deign however to caſt a glance on a ſhort *Voyage de la Raiſon et de la Vérité**, and on a remark relative to Tactics, in which the editor has inſerted I know not what, that relates to you.

Pardon his boldneſs, for it may well be ex-

* The Travels, or Progreſs, of Reaſon and Truth.

pected that Julian-Marcus-Aurelius will permit men to ſay what they think.

We approach the time when the affair of D'Etallonde Morival muſt be decided. He intends ſhortly to write, either to the chancellor of France or to the king in perſon. Will your majeſty permit him to aſſume the title of your engineer? I can venture to aſſure you it is a title he is well worthy of bearing.

Will you further permit him to write himſelf lieutenant, inſtead of ſecond lieutenant? The honour of appertaining to you is not vanity; it is a glory which overawes, and will make him reſpected among the Gauls.

He will not ſend away his letter till he has firſt laid a copy before your majeſty, and till it ſhall have met with your approbation.

You will be aſtoniſhed at this affair; it is, as I have already ſaid, a hundred times more iniquitous than that of the family of Calas. You will here ſee a young innocent gentleman condemned to the death of parricides, by three provincial judges, the one of whom was a declared enemy; the ſecond an innkeeper and dealer in hogs, formerly an attorney, who never had exerciſed the profeſſion of advocate; and the third was I know not who. This dreadful and abſurd act, of our Gauls, will be demonſtrated;

ſtrated; and ſhould the ſimple, modeſt, and true recital be honoured with the approbation of your majeſty, that will to us be every thing we can wiſh.

I wait your orders on this ſubject, as the greateſt favour which can conſole my old age, and induce me cheerfully to wait the approach of death.

Accept, ſire, my reſpect, my admiration, my devotedneſs, and my regret to find I muſt end my career at a diſtance from Pruſſia.

LETTER CCCCXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, February 11, 1775.

YOU overwhelm me with the moſt flattering favours; you render the wretchedneſs of age halcyon days. You deign to promiſe me your portrait, and you embelliſh one of your letters with the beſt verſes you have ever written ſince the time in which you ſaid—

Et quoique admirateur d'Alexandre et d'Alcide,
J'euſſe aimé mieux pourtant les vertus d'Ariſtide *.

* And, though an admirer of Alexander and Hercules, I more admire the virtues of Ariſtides.

In fine, you grant your protection to the oppreſſed innocence of Morival. Add to all this, Voiture was far from writing ſo well as your majeſty, notwithſtanding that you daily cauſe two hundred thouſand men to be exerciſed.

Strange Proteus! Hark! Apollo's lyre!
We run to liſten—We 're deceiv'd—
Nor eyes nor ears can be believ'd;
'Tis Mars! with pond'rous ſpear and ſhield
Arm'd for the field,
And thither bearing ſword and fire!
Again in error! Mars? Oh no!
Philoſopher and ſage,
'Tis he! The mirror of the wond'ring age!
'Tis Plato! Lucian! Cicero!
Oh that I could the ſecret find
By which, in him whom all admire,
Nature has drawn the whole of human kind!

I have at length received very certain information, relative to the ſinguiar cataſtrophe of your dependant. It would indeed be a farcical ſcene, were not cannibals the actors. It is the height of ridicule, and of horror. Nothing can be more worthy of the Gauls.

No, ſire; I will not, at the age of eighty-two, leave my bed to go to Verſailles. I ſwore never to go thither again, on the day that I received, at Potſdam, the letter of the miniſter M. de Puiſieux, which informed me that I no longer could

could hold my place of hiſtoriographer, nor preſerve my penſion. I will die at the feet of the Alps, though I ſhould much rather come and die at your feet.

With reſpect to your dependant, I cannot underſtand why he ſhould be ſo mad as to wiſh to debaſe himſelf, by obtaining a pardon. The infamous word *pardon* is applicable to none but criminals. The inheritance that would accrue to him would be trifling; and certainly his talents and good behaviour will be ſufficient, in your ſervice. Believe me, ſire, you have few officers more attached to their duty, and few engineers more intelligent. He found, among my waſte papers, ſome particulars relative to one of your victories, of which he has drawn a regular plan. You will hence ſee, ſire, if the young man do not underſtand his profeſſion, and if he do not merit your protection.

Since your majeſty has granted me permiſſion, I ſhall keep him till he has entirely learnt his art; nor will I forget him at my death. But, with reſpect to pardon, I will hear of no pardon, except the heavenly one of the Moliniſts and the Janſeniſts. I will never thus debaſe one of your officers, who is worthy ſo to be. If they will ſign his honourable juſtification, ſo be it; any thing leſs to me appears ſhameful.

In theſe ſentiments I ſhall die; I ſhall expire peculiarly penetrated with regret, at not having ended my life with the greateſt man in Europe, whom I am daring enough to love as well as to admire.

LETTER CCCCXVII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 12, 1775.

STILL in her ſpring your youthful Muſe
Is graceful, freſh, and fair;
No hoar-froſt nips the blooming flow'rs
That wanton in her hair.

Bow'd by the cumbrous load of years,
Apollo me diſdains;
While, dull in wiſdom, Pallas prompts
Some few, ſlow, languid ſtrains.

On you, his ſon, his choiceſt gifts,
And arts, God Phœbus ſhow'rs;
And all his vivifying rays,
In bleſt effuſion, pours.

But Phœbus' rays, and arts divine,
And fam'd Promethean fire,
To heav'n again have ta'en their flight,
Nor more my ſoul inſpire.

Of

Of bards, though Homer long has claim'd
Precedence, as his due,
On bifold hill, the gods decree
The higheſt rank to you.

Ah! Why did I devote my youth
To war, and dazzling fame?
Or age bring on and ere I'm old,
To win an empty name?

While we the thunderbolts of Mars
With fell deſtruction hurl'd,
You Error cruſh'd, and with your ſongs
Made glad a liſt'ning world.

When peace prevails, in cold contempt,
Like lumb'ring ſpear, or car,
Eclips'd the hero's glory lies,
How great ſoe'er in war!

Erſt Taſſo had, in Cenſure's ſpite,
Would Fate have ſpar'd his days,
Triumphant, in the Capitol,
Been crown'd with living bays.

Lo! Envy pallid grows, with rage,
Your Sybarites to hear
Recal you from Helvetian hills,
And ſtill your worth revere.

Haſte to the Louvre, haſte! Behold
The wreaths the Muſes wove;
That Louis, and a grateful land,
Might crown the bard they love.

I imagine

I imagine I ſhall ſoon receive letters from you, dated at Paris. Take my word for it, a journey to Verſailles is better than a journey to the valley of Jehoſophat.

Here comes a ſecond letter: I am aſked from what officer; and I reply from lieutenant general Voltaire, who has ſent me a plan of his own invention. You will be thought the rival of Vauban; and will ſoon raiſe baſtions, ravelins, and counterguards, that ſhall be called after their inventor; and fortreſſes ſhall be taken according to your rules.

I do not augur well for the affairs of poor D'Etallonde; at leaſt not unleſs your ſtay at Paris, and the talent of perſuaſion which you poſſeſs in ſo ſuperior a degree, ſhould encourage ſome virtuous ſouls to aſſiſt you. But the parliament will not obey. Reſtiff as it is, even to its reinſtitutor, Maurepas, what will it not be toward you?

I have juſt read your tranſlation of Taſſo, which ſome lucky chance put into my hands. Had Boileau ſeen this tranſlation, he would have ſoftened the rigorous ſentence which he pronounced againſt Taſſo. You have even preſerved the paragraphs, ſo as to correſpond with the original ſtanzas.

Europe at preſent produces nothing; ſhe ſeems

ſeems to repoſe, after having furniſhed ſuch abundant harveſts in paſt times. A tragedy by Dorat has made its appearance, the plot of which appears to me much confuſed; the intereſt being divided between three perſons, and the paſſions being only ſketched. I read it with great indifference. Perhaps the art of the actors ſupplies theſe deficiencies; and it may be inferior in the cloſet to what it is on the ſtage. Pepin, your mayor of the palace, is the hero; and there are ſituations ſuſceptible of pathos; but they are not naturally introduced, and the poet appears to me to want ardour. You have ſpoiled us; having been accuſtomed to your works, we take offence at thoſe which have not the ſame beauties, nor the ſame charms. After this confeſſion, which I make in the name of all Europe, judge how much I am intereſted in your preſervation, and how many benedictions the philoſopher of Sans-Souci beſtows on the Epictetus of Ferney. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, February 15, 1775.

I AM not aſtoniſhed that the huge baron Pölnitz is in good health, at the age of eighty-eight; he is tall, well made, and has a ſtrong conſtitution. Alexander, who was likewiſe of an excellent conſtitution, and very handſome in his perſon, died at the age of thirty, after having gained only three victories; but that was becauſe he was not temperate; becauſe he addicted himſelf to drinking.

When I praiſe him for having won battles, while playing on the flute like Achilles, it is not becauſe I do not continue to abhor war; for I certainly would go and live among the quakers, in Penſylvania, were war to exiſt every where elſe.

I know not whether your majeſty may have ſeen a little book, which is publicly ſold at Paris, intitled—*Le Partage de la Pologne* *.

It is ſaid to be tranſlated from the Engliſh;

* The Partition of Poland, in Seven Dialogues, between the King of Pruſſia, the Empreſs Queen, and the Empreſs of Ruſſia. See note to Letter CCCCXXII. T.

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it has not however the air of a tranſlation. The eſſential part of the work has certainly been written by one of thoſe Poles who are at Paris. It contains much wit, art occaſionally, and atrocious abuſe often. This would be a good opportunity for publiſhing a certain epic poem, which you had the goodneſs to ſend me ſome two years ſince. Though you know how to conquer and acquire, you do not the leſs know, better than any other, how to ridicule. The nephew of Conſtantine, who laughed and cauſed others to laugh at the expence of the Cæſars, did not underſtand raillery ſo well as you do.

I am very ill treated in the Seven Dialogues. I have not a hundred and ſixty thouſand men to anſwer; and your majeſty will tell me I wiſh to ſhelter myſelf under the protection of your Ægis; but in reality I am exceedingly vain of ſuffering in your cauſe.

I was entrapped, like a blockhead, when I took it for granted, previous to the war with the Turks, that the empreſs of Ruſſia had entered into meaſures with the king of Poland, to do juſtice to the Diſſidents; and that ſhe really intended to eſtabliſh liberty of conſcience. You kings deceive us excellently. You reſemble the Gods of Homer, who made men ſubſervient

to their deſigns, without the poor people once ſuſpecting the truth.

Be this as it may, there are horrid things ſaid in theſe Seven Dialogues, which are very current.

With reſpect to D'Etallonde Morival, whoſe preſent employment is wholly in counterſcarps and trenches, I ſincerely thank your majeſty, for being kind enough to leave him with me ſome time longer. He will but for this become a more expert murderer, gunner, and engineer; and he will ſerve you with unalterable zeal, at every battle of Roſbach which you ſhall hereafter fight.

I hope, in a few months, to ſend your majeſty a ſhort abſtract of his Gaul-like adventure, at which you will be aſtoniſhed. I wiſh he were to plead at your tribunal. The Gauls are certainly a very ſtrange nation! Is it poſſible to combine ſo much ſuperſtition and ſo much philoſophy; ſo much guilt and ſo much gaiety; ſo many crimes and ſo many virtues; ſo much wit and ſo much folly? Yet theſe people ſtill act a conſpicuous part in Europe. Nor is any thing wanting to render their acting tolerable, but a Louvois or a Colbert. Colbert, Louvois, and Turenne, however, are not all combined equal to the perſon whoſe name begins with an F,

but who does not love that the incenſe of praiſe ſhould be whiffed in his face.

I am, in all humility, and with the ſame ſentiments I had forty years ago,

The old Valetudinarian of Ferney.

LETTER CCCCXIX.

From the King.

February 23, 1775.

NO monarch in Europe is capable of making me a preſent, equal to that I have juſt received from you. How many charming things does this volume contain! What an aſtoniſhing old man! What a mind! You are immortal! I own—I, who have no very firm belief in a being diſtinct from the body, which is called *ſoul*—yet, by you obliged to have faith in the doctrine, I own it muſt be granted that you, of all thinking beings, are the only one who have, at the age of eighty, preſerved ſuch force, ſuch vigour of mind, ſuch pleaſantry, and ſuch grace, as are no where now to be found except in your works. On this I congratulate you, and implore univerſal Nature that ſhe will long deign

to

to preſerve this reſervoir of happy thoughts, in which ſhe delights.

I think D'Etallonde very fortunate, to be at the ſource from which ſo many great works flow. He may openly aſſume that title which may be moſt convenient to aid him in ſaving the remainder of his ruined fortune. D'Alembert informs me that black gowns proceed very ſlowly, and that years are neceſſary to repair the injuſtice of a moment. If this be true, he muſt arm himſelf with patience; unleſs you ſhould go to Paris, as every body ſays you will; and, by the exertion of thoſe grand talents which nature has endowed you with, ſhould be enabled to ſave innocence oppreſſed. This would furniſh a ſubject for a ſentimental tragedy, the ſcene at Ferney. An unfortunate man, in want of protectors, ſhould be invited thither by a ſage; and ſhould be aſtoniſhed to receive more aid from a ſtranger than from his relations. The philoſopher of Ferney, from motives of humanity, ſhould exert himſelf ſo efficaciouſly, in behalf of the oppreſſed, that Louis XVI. ſhould ſay—"Being protected by a ſage, he cannot but be innocent. I will ſend him his pardon."—A half couſin, with whom D'Etallonde might be in love, ſhould be deſired to bring him

his

his pardon. She muſt enter in the laſt act. The humane philoſopher ſhould celebrate the nuptials; and every gueſt ſhould pronounce an eulogium, and declaim on the beneficence of this divine man, to whom D'Etallonde ſhould erect an altar, as to his tutelary deity.

The ſubject, in able hands, might be productive of much intereſt, and furniſh affecting and moving ſcenes.

But it is not for me to ſend ſubjects to one who poſſeſſes a treaſure of imagination; and who, like Jupiter, brings forth goddeſſes in complete armour.

Be you at Ferney, be you at Verſailles, or be you where you will, do not forget the hermit of Sans-Souci; who will ever remain indebted to you for the fine preſent which you have beſtowed. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXX.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 28, 1775.

PROUD is the heart of man; he hates to find
Superior claims of merit or of mind:

Genius offends his wounded vanity,
Its equals would the worthleſs vulgar be.
Hence Genius ne'er true retribution gains;
Hence Envy, falſe and foul, deſpotic reigns.

Of tumult and of tyranny the curſe,
Of arts and arms the cradle and the nurſe,
Athens, too ſoon by ranc'rous Envy won,
Unjuſtly baniſh'd many a fav'rite ſon;
Sent many a warrior, many a ſage to roam;
And ſent as oft, in tears, to win them home:
Much were they miſs'd, when they no more could arm,
To ſhield their tyrants from impending harm.

Whoe'er would ſoar ſublime o'er vulgar laws,
Muſt find his ſole reward in ſelf-applauſe:
Full ſoon ſhall jealous clouds begin to ſpread,
And dark'ning burſt in thunder o'er his head.
Eugene neglected; Bayle expell'd to where
Batavia's ſons inhale a freer air;
Condé the great in priſon left to pine;
And now the rival of thoſe bards divine,
Homer and Virgil, whoſe illuſtrious name
Shall live of France the glory and the ſhame,
To hills Helvetian baniſh'd; all but ſhow,
How ſmall the gratitude that nations know!

Spirit divine! Smote by the love of Fame,
Wouldſt thou enjoy the glories of thy name,
Add years to years, old Neſtor's age outvie,
Long as thy genius live—and never die

So ſhall Earth's ſons delighted hither ſend,
The buſt to purchaſe of their common friend!

So

So ſhall we own, while thus thy form they prize,
Mankind are grateful, juſt, and wiſe.

The diſputes at the porcelain manufactory, to obtain your buſt, is no idle tale; the workmen cannot make it as faſt as it is wanted. The ſlow good ſenſe of our Germans requires ſtrong impreſſions; but, having once been made, theſe impreſſions are durable.

The work you mention, by marſhal Saxe, is known to me, and I have written for a copy. The facts are recent and public; the maps are the only intereſting part, becauſe the ground is the draught-board of we cannibals; and it is that which decides on the knowledge or the ignorance of thoſe by whom it is occupied.

This part of my letter is addreſſed to lieutenant general Voltaire; the remainder is for the patriarch of Ferney, the humane philoſopher, the protector of D'Etallonde; he who exerts all his powers to annul the ſentence of the *infamous* ——. I ſhall refuſe no title to D'Etallonde, if that can be of any ſervice to him; therefore let him aſſume ſuch as he ſhall think moſt to his advantage.

You ſuppoſe me to be more vain than I am: I have not ſince the war thought either of plans, battles, or any paſt circumſtances. It is

neceſſary to think of the future, and forget what is gone by, which thought will not alter; whereas there are many meaſures to take for that which is to come.

This diſcourſe ſomewhat ſpeaks the young man. Recollect however that kingdoms are immortal; and that thoſe who are at their head ought not to grow old while they govern.

Should you go to Verſailles, D'Etallonde is then in ſafety. Should not your health permit you to undertake the journey, I do not augur any happy iſſue to his ſuit. You have indeed ſome philoſophers in France; but the multitude are ſuperſtitious, and ſtifle the cries of reaſon. Our German prieſts, whether catholic or proteſtant, are acquainted with nothing but intereſt; the French are governed by fanaticiſm: their phrenzy is not to be cured; they think their delirium an honour, and innocence remains oppreſſed. Will the old parliament, rebellious as it is to its reſtorers, bend at the throne of reaſon; acting, as it does, in a manner ſo oppoſite to its duties, and its true intereſts?

But who will think of D'Etallonde, when all are buſied in bringing the dreſs of Henry IV. in vogue? Men muſt change their wardrobes, provide themſelves with ſtuffs, and employ the art of the taylor, to be in faſhion. This is a much

much more important object than that of a criminal proſecution, already determined. Some of his relations excepted, all France is ignorant that a citizen, named D'Etallonde, eſcaped unjuſt and cruel puniſhments, to which he had been ſentenced, and which were not proportioned to his crime; that being nothing more than a boy's trick.

I ſalute the patriarch of Ferney, and wiſh him long life. I have read his new tragedy, which is by no means a bad one. I ſhould venture ſome trifling remarks, ignorant though I am; but, unable to ſay, like Corregio, *ſon pittor anche io* *, I ſhall keep ſilence, entreating you not to forget the philoſopher of Sans-Souci. *Vale*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXXI.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 2, 1775.

BARON Pölnitz is not the only man upward of eighty whom we have here, and who is in good health. We have the old Le Cointe, whom perhaps you remember, and whoſe age

* I too am a painter.

exceeds that of Pölnitz by ten years. The good lord marſhal is nearly as old; and we ſtill find his converſation cheerful and witty. You have more of this elementary or celeſtial fire than all whom I have named; which fire or mind, called *anima* by the Greeks, occaſions the duration of our frail machine. Your laſt works, for which I once more thank you, bear not any of the marks of decrepitude. While your mind ſhall continue to preſerve ſo much force and pleaſantry, your body will not periſh.

You tell me of Poliſh Dialogues, with which I am unacquainted. Whatever abuſe there may be in theſe Dialogues, it will be Sarmatian; and whatever of wit or art, theſe will appertain to the Gauls, by whom they are protected. My opinion on ſuch ſatires reſembles that of Epictetus—"If any one ſpeak ill of thee, and it be true, correct thyſelf; if falſe, laugh at the ſlander."—Age has taught me to become a good poſt horſe: I travel my ſtage, and do not trouble myſelf with the curs that bark on the road.

I am ſtill more careful not to print my nonſenſe: I write poetry only for my amuſement. To tranſmit our works to poſterity, it were neceſſary to be either a Boileau, a Racine, or a Voltaire; none of whoſe talents I poſſeſs. Whatever follies of mine may have been printed, they have

have not any of them appeared with my conſent. During the time when it was faſhionable for men to fix their teeth in me, my manuſcripts were ſtolen, and were printed at the very moment when they might do me an injury. It is allowable for man to relax, and amuſe himſelf with literature; but not for him to torment the public with his inſignificant thoughts.

I wrote the poem of the Confederates, which you mention, to rid myſelf of languor. I was in bed, ill of the gout; and this I found an agreeable relief. But the work alludes to many perſons who are ſtill living; and I neither ought wiſh to offend any one.

The Poliſh diet draws toward a cloſe; the affair of the diſſidents is now terminating. The empreſs of Ruſſia has not deceived you; they will have full ſatisfaction, the honour of which will be wholly hers. This princeſs will find it more eaſy to render the Poles tolerant, than you and I ſhall to render your parliament juſt and humane.

You enumerate the contradictions which you find in the character of your countrymen. I allow the fact; yet, to be juſt, we muſt confeſs that the ſame contradictions are met with among all nations. Here, in Germany, the people are not ſo eccentric, becauſe they are conſtitutionally

more phlegmatic: but, among the ardent and impaſſioned French, ſuch contradictions are more marked. Therefore, among them, thoſe preceptors of the human race who endeavour to turn their ardour toward benevolence, humanity, toleration, and all the virtues, are the more reſpectable. I am acquainted with one of theſe ſages, who is ſaid to live far hence at Ferney. I inceſſantly wiſh a thouſand bleſſings on his head, and every proſperity of which man is ſuſceptible. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXXII.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 26, 1775.

NO more the howl ungrateful ſhalt thou hear
Of Envy's imps, diſcordant in thine ear;
Their clamours I will ſtifle, and their ſtrife,
By writing an eulogium on thy life.
With flow'rs I'll ſtrew the path thou yet ſhalt run,
In gratitude for all the good thou'ſt done;
For all th' immortal garlands thou haſt weav'd;
For all the godlike pleaſures I've receiv'd;
For verſes that enchant the liſt'ning ear,
Live in the mem'ry, force the ſmile, the tear,
Oe'rflow the heart, ſeize, fix, tranſport the mind,
And make the verieſt wretch the firſt of humankind!

Oh bleſt were I, for all the joys I've known,
Could I but render all thoſe joys thy own!

The poor Proteus, whoſe eulogium you write, is but a dilettante; a kind of people ſo called in Italy, who, lovers of the arts and ſciences, underſtand them only ſuperficially, but who however are ranked in a ſuperior claſs to thoſe who are totally ignorant.

I have at length procured the Seven Dialogues, and have learnt their whole hiſtory. The author of the work is an Engliſhman, named *Lindſic**, by

* Not *Lindſic*, but *Lind*, is the true name. He was the gentleman who wrote "Letters on the Preſent State of Poland;" and who was preceptor to the young prince Poniatowſki. I am informed he was not in orders; and I imagine the perſons who made enquiries for the king, confounded his name with that of the reverend Mr. Lindſay. The pamphlet was publiſhed, under the fictitious name of Gotlieb Panſmouzer, by Mr. Elmſly; and was, almoſt immediately after publication, ſuppreſſed by the author; not, as I conjecture, merely from the bitterneſs of the ſatire againſt the king of Pruſia, but likewiſe becauſe of the ſeverity with which the late empreſs queen, and the preſent Catherine II. of Ruſſia, who were two of the dramatis perſonæ, were treated. The deſpotiſm of foreign governments induces their reſpective ambaſſadors to be very alert and clamorous, when any thing appears which they conſtrue to be derogatory to the dignity of their ſovereigns; and it was impoſſible for this extraordinary pamphlet to eſcape unnoticed by them: it painted the princes whom they repreſented

by profeſſion a divine, and preceptor to young prince Poniatowſki, nephew of the king of Poland. This ſatire was written by him in Engliſh, at the inſtigation of the Czartorinſkis, the king's uncles.

The work finiſhed, it was diſcovered that it would not be underſtood in Poland, unleſs it were tranſlated into French, which was immediately executed. But, as the tranſlator was not equal to the taſk, the Dialogues were ſent to one Gerard, at Dantzic, who at that time reſided there as conſul from France, and who is at preſent a clerk in the office of the foreign department, under the count de Vergennes. Gerard, who has wit, but who does me the honour cordially to hate me, retouched theſe Dialogues,

ſented in colours too truly odious for them to remain indolent. I have, though with great difficulty, procured both the Engliſh pamphlet and the French tranſlation. To the latter is annexed an anſwer, in *Seven Letters*, ſaid in the title page to be *par main de maitre*; that is, written by the king himſelf. The ſuppoſition of the king, that the Dialogues had been retouched, and put into the form in which they were printed, in French, was ill founded; the tranſlation is a faithful one, except ſuch paſſages as the tranſlator did not underſtand, which were but few. The characteriſtics of the *Seven Letters*, in anſwer, are dulneſs, ſpleen, and perſonalities againſt count L—, the ſuppoſed author of the Dialogues. If the king wrote theſe *Seven Letters*, his anger had benumbed his faculties. T.

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and put them into their preſent form. I laughed heartily at them: they contain groſs, inſipid, and dull things, here and there; but there are alſo traits of true humour. I ſhall not tilt with gooſe-quills againſt this ſycophant. It is neceſſary to act according to the remark of cardinal Mazarin—"Let the French ſing, provided they "do but let us act."

I return to the poor D'Etallonde, whoſe affair does not ſeem as if it would end to his advantage. As I afforded him his firſt aſylum, I ſhall be his laſt reſource. An engineer formed under the direction of Voltaire will, in my apprehenſion, be a phenix.

With reſpect to the battle, the plan of which he has traced, it is ſo long ſince it was fought that I ſcarcely can recollect it. D'Etallonde might aid you in your labours, while beſieging the *infamous* ——; and might form the batteries, the baliſtæ, and the catapultæ, entirely to batter down the tower of ſuperſtition, which is the laſt place of refuge for old women, and monks with tonſured pates.

I perceive you prefer the abode of Ferney to that of Verſailles; though you might without danger prefer the latter. The diſtinctions which you would perhaps receive from your ungrateful country, would be more to its honour than to your own. You do not accept immortality as a

gift

gift: it is a thing which you have beſtowed upon yourſelf.

The good intentions of the queen of France are, however, her beſt eulogium. To ſee a young princeſs repairing the wrongs of a nation on whoſe throne ſhe is ſeated, and particularly rendering juſtice to reſplendent merit, is well worthy of herſelf.

The portrait which you wiſhed to poſſeſs, and which is more proper to disfigure than to embelliſh an apartment, you will receive by Michelet. I wiſhed the dreſs to have been that of an anchorite, but it was not ſo. Could the portrait ſpeak, it would tell you that no one wiſhes you more bleſſings, nor is more intereſted in your preſervation, than the philoſopher of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, March 28, 1775.

WHENEVER I write to your majeſty on ſerious buſineſs, I tremble as our regiments did

did at Roſbach; but your bounty and your magnanimity reſtore my courage.

I entreat you would deign to read, in one of your leiſure moments, if any ſuch you have, the memorial of D'Etallonde; it is entirely founded on the original documents, which were concealed from us, but which we have at length obtained. You will, in this affair, which is more wicked than the proſecutions of Calas and Sirven, ſee how far it is ſometimes poſſible for our Gauls to be frivolous and atrocious. You will at once perceive the imbecillity of the Pierrot of a pantomime, and the barbarity of the maſſacre of Saint Bartholomew. It does not from thence follow that the polite ſocieties of Paris are not infinitely eſtimable; though the perſons called magiſtrates are often the very oppoſite.

I dare believe the reading of this memorial will make you ſhudder with horror. We have determined to ſend it, not only to the advocates of Paris, but to all the juriſconſultes of Europe. Our intention is to abide by their deciſion. D'Etallonde having, with your permiſſion, aſſumed the title of your aid-du-camp and engineer, ought not to aſk pardon of a keeper of the ſeals; nor to debaſe himſelf ſo far as to ſubmit to be impriſoned, to have his ſentence annulled.

If

If you will but deign to let us have the opinion of your chancellor, and that of one of your firſt judges, their deciſion, added to ſuch as we hope to obtain from Naples, Milan, and London, will be ſufficiently authentic, to make the guilt and the opprobrium of the horrible judgment pronounced againſt D'Etallonde and the chevalier La Barre, alight only on the aſſaſſins by whom they were condemned.

This is a new manner of demanding juſtice; but, ſhould your majeſty approve it, I think it excellent and efficacious. It may put a curb on our cannibal Gauls, who ſport with the lives of men. Perhaps there is not at preſent, in all Europe, an affair more worthy of your protection. It is for Marcus Aurelius to give leſſons to barbarians.

As ſoon as we ſhall poſſeſs the deciſions of the advocates of Paris, joined to the judgment of the firſt juriſconſultes in Germany and Italy, and perhaps even of Rome, I will reſtore D'Etallonde to your majeſty. He is worthy to ſerve you, and waits but for this moment to return to that duty which he holds dear.

For my part, I ſhall wait for death with unconcern; and, provided I can but ſucceed in this juſt enterprize, and ſtill preſerve your majeſty's favour, I ſhall die happy.

LET-

LETTER CCCCXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, April 27, 1775.

I HAVE this day received, by your majeſty's goodneſs, the portrait of a very great man. I intend to inſcribe two lines under this portrait, written by the original, changing only a word or two:

Imitateur heureux d'Alexandre et d'Alcide,
Il aimait mieux pourtant les vertus d'Ariſtide *.

I own the painter has given you leſs of the figure of Ariſtides than of Hercules. There is no Gaul who does not tremble at ſeeing this portrait. This is preciſely what I wiſh.

No Gaul who here beholds your martial mien
But feels he has the man of Roſbach ſeen.

What pleaſes me moſt is, that you ſeem to be in full health.

I and Morival throw ourſelves at the feet of the hero. It is not the intention of this young man to degrade himſelf ſo much as to aſk a

* The happy rival of Alexander and Hercules, who yet delighted more in the virtues of Ariſtides.

pardon of which he certainly has no need, in the eyes of Europe: he wiſhes, and ought ſo to be ſatisfied, to make the turpitude and horror of theſe ſentences of the Gauls evident. The affair is more abominable than that of Calas: for the judges of Calas were only deceived; but thoſe of the chevalier La Barre were, in the very gaiety of their hearts, ſanguinary monſters.

I refer to your judgment, ſire, and wait your deciſion, that by this we may regulate our conduct. Our laws are atrocious and ridiculous; but Morival acknowledges none but yours. He troubles himſelf little concerning the ſmall portion which would revert to him, in the diviſion of the family effects: he wiſhes to acknowledge no other family than that of his regiment, nor other king or maſter than your majeſty. I have been ſome time, ſire, without writing to you: an alarming epidemic diſeaſe has been current in our cantons, from which my niece has been in danger of death, and under which I am ſtill ſuffering.

Live long, ſire; not to increaſe your glory, for to that you have nothing to add, but for the happineſs of your ſtates; and preſerve that kindneſs toward me which conſoles me for all my afflictions.

LET-

LETTER CCCCXXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, May 1, 1775.

YOUR laſt letter is a maſterpiece of reaſon, wit, taſte, and bounty.

A ſage, when ſpeaking; when you ſing, a ſwan;
A hero, who deſcends to be—a man.
My youth returns, my thoughts from care are freed,
My heart is mov'd, whene'er your works I read.
Conſtant in love, I ne'er yet knew mutation;
I join your foes—but 'tis in admiration!

I feel joy, mingled with tenderneſs, when I ſee thoſe ſtrangers, who come to viſit me, bow before your portrait, and ſay—"Here is the "great man!"

Nations have each in turn poſſeſs'd their ſage!
Their demi-god!—This is the Pruſſian age!

I grant that we may at preſent obſerve, among moſt of the monarchs of Europe, an emulation to diſtinguiſh themſelves by great and uſeful eſtabliſhments. It even appears that ſuperſtition diminiſhes in ſome courts. But where is the prince who approaches your philoſophy? It is moſt true that you think like Marcus Au-

relius, and that you write like Cicero, though in a language not your own. The Familiar Letters of Cicero are not equal to thoſe of Frederic the Great. You are more pleaſant than he was, like as you are a better general; though he once fought on the ſame ground that Alexander did.

I heartily thank your majeſty for your good intentions in behalf of *Divus D'Etallundus*, the martyr of philoſophy. There are as much grandeur and virtue in protecting ſuch martyrs, as there are infamy and barbarity in their perſecution.

I am told your majeſty is travelling into Sileſia, attended by the princes of Wirtemberg. I know not whether by the princes of Wirtemberg be meant the reigning duke, prince Louis, prince Eugene, or ſome of their children. If it be the reigning duke, I venture to entreat your protection. It will give me pleaſure not to die without obtaining new proofs of your bounty: I ſhall then lay me down to reſt in the peace of the Lord. I end my life by eſtabliſhing a colony at Ferney. Your majeſty may remember my firſt deſign was to eſtabliſh one at Cleves. At that time, I hoped to be fortunate enough to throw myſelf once again at your feet: but this is a conſolation for which I muſt no longer

indulge a hope. Deign to preſerve that remembrance of me which is envied by all the princes who have approached you.

LETTER CCCCXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, May, 1775.

TO-DAY I write to Ariſtides, and leave Alexander and Hercules to ſome other opportunity.

I with Morival throw ourſelves at your feet. The ſubject is this—Thoſe good folks, who are at preſent the maſters of the kingdom of the Gauls, will grant him his pardon; and, in fifteen or twenty years, this pardon will put him in poſſeſſion of his legitimate rights, as a younger brother of Normandy. But our charming laws require that, to enable him hereafter to receive this trifling inheritance, he ſhould kneel in preſence of the parliament, which may enregiſter, or refuſe to enregiſter, the pardon granted.

Morival is a youth alive to honour; and thinks that to kneel, in the uniform of a Pruſſian officer, before theſe tie-wigged gentry, would partake of infamy. He ſays this uni-

form ſhould be employed to make the Gauls themſelves kneel.

Such is nearly the anſwer he has returned to your miniſter at Paris. I approve the ſentiment, Gaul though I am, and flatter myſelf it will not diſpleaſe your majeſty.

You have had the bounty to write to us, and ſay you would be our laſt reſource; you have ever been our only one; for I have continually informed the family, and our friends at Paris, that we would not accept a pardon; we expect nothing but from your kindneſs. You have permitted D'Etallonde Morival to call himſelf engineer and adjutant to your majeſty. Theſe titles which, as I believe, do not give any military rank, may conform to your army regulations, without infringing on the claims of any man.

If your majeſty will deign to grant him only ſome trifling pay, he will very honourably ſubſiſt, with the little aids he may receive from his family and his friends. He will come to receive your commands, the moment you ſhall be pleaſed to give them. I conjure you to let Europe ſee how ſuperior your protection is to that of our parliaments. You deigned to ſuccour the family of Calas: D'Etallonde is oppreſſed with ſtill greater injuſtice. He is the victim

victim of ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm, which you hate as much as I abhor. It appertains only to the grandeur of your mind, and of your genius, openly to honour, by your benevolence, a very prudent, brave, and uſeful officer, who has been unworthily perſecuted by the moſt cowardly, and the moſt barbarous, of mankind. You are formed to ſet examples, not only to the Gauls, but to all Europe.

I wait your majeſty's commands, and venture to hope they will conſole my decrepitude; and that my grey hairs may not be brought down with ſorrow to the grave, as was formerly ſaid.

LETTER CCCCXXVII.

From the King.

May 10, 1775.

YOU muſt not accuſe me of ſlowneſs in ſending you the conſultation of our juriſconſultes; it is they who have trifled thus long with me; I have but juſt received their learned deciſion. If juſtice here be ſo ſlow, what have we not to expect from the parliament of Paris? Neither you, I, nor Morival, will live long enough to ſee an end to the affair.

The moſt certain ſtep will be to renounce it; not having power to ſoften the rocky hearts of theſe iniquitous judges. I believe fanaticiſm and ſuperſtition to have had leſs part, in the butchery of Abbeville, than obſtinacy. There are people who determine never to be in the wrong; and who would ſooner ſuffer themſelves to be ſtoned to death than acknowledge the exceſs into which they had been hurried, by their too raſh precipitation.

At preſent, nothing is thought of at Paris but the coronation of Rheims: were there a thouſand D'Etallondes, they would not be heard. The eyes of the people are fixed on the hoſtages of the holy vial; they wiſh to know who is to carry the crown, who the ſceptre, who the globe, and and who the king's candleſtick, to light him to bed. Theſe things have much greater attraction than the juſtification of an innocent man. Such is the propenſity of your counſellors of the grand chamber; and Voltaire, the protector of innocence without the power of ſaving it, provided with the conſultations of integrity, will have no other reſource than that of recording in his writings, read by all Europe, the proceedings of the executioners of La Barre and his companions.

I drive theſe horrors and atrocious acts from my

my memory, which do but inſpire gloomy melancholy, that I may ſpeak to you on a more agreeable ſubject. Le Kain is to come here this ſummer, and I ſhall ſee him perform in your tragedies, which to me will be a feaſt. We had Aufreſne laſt year, whoſe noble, unaffected, and natural manner gave me great ſatisfaction. Whether art can, in Le Kain, ſurpaſs what nature effected in the other, is to be ſeen.

But, previous to this, I have three hundred leagues to travel, in my journeys through different provinces. On my return, I ſhall have the pleaſure to write to you, that I may hear from the patriarch of Ferney, in whoſe behalf the hermit of Sans-Souci inceſſantly puts up his prayers. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXXVIII.

From the King.

May 17, 1775.

FIVE hundred French miles, which I have travelled in four weeks, will ſerve as my excuſe, in anſwer to three letters, two of which arrived the moment before my departure, and

the laſt at my return. I anſwer according to their dates.

The portrait you have received is the performance of madame Terbuſch, who, not to debaſe her pencil, has embelliſhed my wrinkled face with the graces of youth. You know, let a man be but ſomebody, and he will not want flatterers; and that flattery is a trade which painters underſtand as perfectly as the moſt refined courtiers.

> Let him, whoſe paintings muſt by you be ſeen,
> The vulgar raiſe, and dignify the mean.

Certainly neither the portrait nor the original merit to have any one fall at their feet.

Did the affair of Morival however depend only on me, it would long ſince have been ended to his ſatisfaction. You know I doubted the poſſibility of ſoftening judges, who, that they may be thought infallible, never reverſe their ſentence. Parliamentary forms, and bigots, whoſe number is more conſiderable in France than in Germany, appeared to me invincible obſtacles to the reſtoring of Morival to his juſt rights. I have promiſed you to be his laſt reſource, and I will keep my word. He need but come here, and he ſhall have a commiſſion, and the pay of an engineer captain, a

profeſſion in which he will here find opportunities of making a progreſs; and fanaticiſm will burſt with ſpleen, at ſeeing that Voltaire, and I, an inſignificant individual, were able to protect a young man from her gripe, who forgot to obſerve the punctilios of eccleſiaſtic ceremonies.

You make me tremble, while telling me of your illneſs. I am alarmed for your niece, with whom I am unacquainted, but whom I regard as an indiſpenſable ſupport to you in your retreat.

I am now overwhelmed with buſineſs; but in two days affairs will be reſtored to their cuſtomary train, and I can converſe with you more at my eaſe.

Your empreſs ſignalizes herſelf at Moſcow by her beneficence, and the mildneſs with which ſhe treats the adherents of Pugatſchef; thus ſetting a fine example to ſovereigns, in which I rather hope than believe ſhe will be imitated.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Preſerve a man whom all Europe would lament, and I eſpecially, were he no more; and do not forget the recluſe of Sans-Souci.

LETTER CCCCXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, June 21, 1775.

WHILE your majeſty is probably manœuvering thirty or forty thouſand warriors, I think I could not ſelect a more proper opportunity to preſent you with the battle of Roſbach, drawn by D'Etallonde.

He burns with the wiſh of being preſent at ſuch a battle. The extreme bounty with which you have ſent us the conſultation of your firſt magiſtrates, leaves him no other idea but that of ſhedding his blood in your ſervice; the gratitude he owes you, and the honour of being one of your officers, are prior to every other project. He will not accept pardon in France, with which he was before diſguſted. Your laſt favours have excluded every wiſh from his heart, except that of dying a Pruſſian. He hopes at leaſt to appear among the brave men whom your majeſty reviews.

He has been told that his regiment might perhaps exerciſe in your preſence this year. At hearing the news, I thought I beheld a lover with whom his miſtreſs had appointed a meeting.

meeting. He talks of nothing but his departure, nor can I retain him longer. In vain do I tell him he has not yet received an order, for which he muſt wait; he anſwers he will wait for nothing. I am ill formed for the oppoſition of great paſſions, and eſpecially paſſions ſo worthy. Should he return to Weſel in a few days, I have only, ſire, to caſt myſelf at your feet, from this my ſolitary abode, and on the brink of my grave, to thank your majeſty for all you have deigned to do for him; and to flatter myſelf that you will be pleaſed to honour him with ſuch employment as you ſhall think him capable of executing. None but a philoſophic hero can be ſerved by ſuch an officer.

My letter perhaps will arrive unſeaſonably, amid your immenſe occupations; but the moſt trifling affairs are as much preſent to you as the greateſt. M. de Catinat ſaid that his hero muſt be one who could play a game at nine-pins, after having loſt or won a battle. You do not play at nine-pins, but you write verſes, on the day of battle; you take up your flute while your drums are beating in the field; and you deign to write me the moſt charming letters, while making a promotion of general officers. In every way I admire you; and, while admiring, expect every thing from your great ſoul.

I am

I am informed that the coronation of the Moſt Chriſtian King has not been ſo ſplendid as the French hoped; accuſtomed as they are to the magic of Servandoni, and the muſic of Gluck. This coronation is a ſtrange ſpectacle. *A poor king is made to lie down in his ſhirt, in preſence of the prieſts, who make him ſwear to maintain all the rights of the church; and will not permit him to dreſs himſelf, till he firſt ſhall have taken this oath.* There are ſome people who pretend kings ought to make prieſts take oaths; and thus, if I am not miſtaken, does Frederic the Great act, in Sileſia and Weſt Pruſſia.

Before your portrait, ſire, I make oath that my heart ſhall remain your ſubject, as long as life ſhall remain.

LETTER CCCCXXX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, July 7, 1775.

MORIVAL was buſied in meaſuring the Lake of Geneva, and building on its banks an imaginary citadel, when I informed him he might trace out a real one in Weſt Pruſſia, or in your other provinces. He felt your benefits with

with reſpectful gratitude, and equal modeſty. You are his only king, his ſole benefactor. Since you permit him to come and caſt himſelf at your feet, at Potſdam, will you have the goodneſs to inform me whom he muſt addreſs himſelf to, in order to be preſented to your majeſty?

Permit me to join him in that gratitude which he will eternally feel. I cannot, like him, aſpire to the honour of being killed on a baſtion or a curtain. I am no better than an old poltroon, born to die in his bed. My only quality is ſenſibility of heart, and this is wholly occupied in admiring and loving you.

Your ally, the empreſs Catherine, like you, does great things; eſpecially good to her ſubjects. But the king of France carries the palm from every other king, for he works miracles. At his coronation, he touched more than two thouſand four hundred peaſants for the king's evil; and that they are all cured there can be no doubt. Yet it is very certain that one of the miſtreſſes of Louis XIV. died of that diſeaſe, though not for want of having been touched. But this was a very uncommon caſe.

Your majeſty had the goodneſs to inform me that, when your reviews ſhould be over, you would unbend a moment, and liſten to Le Kain

and

and Aufreſne; but I perfectly perceive the military heroes, who march under your enſigns, will gain the laurel from your heroes of tragedy. During a month, and through an extenſive ſpace of four hundred leagues, they have been paſſing in review before your majeſty. It was nearly with the ſame rapidity that one of your predeceſſors, named Julius Cæſar, traverſed our little country of the Gauls. This Julius alſo wrote verſes; for truly great men are capable of every thing.

I am more than ever the adorer and admirer of people of this character, the number of whom is very ſmall.

Accept with bounty, ſire, the profound reſpect, gratitude, and inviolable attachment, of the old Valetudinarian of Mount Jura.

LETTER CCCCXXXI.

From the King.

Potſdam, July 12, 1775.

YOU imagine, my dear patriarch, that I am continually flouriſhing my ſword; yet your letter found me with my pen in my hand, employed in correcting old memoirs, which perhaps

perhaps you remember formerly to have ſeen in a rather ſlovenly ſtate. I am licking my cubs, and endeavouring to make their coats ſhine. The experience of thirty years renders us leſs eaſy to be pleaſed; and, though the work be deſtined to remain for ever buried in ſome duſty archive, I ſtill wiſh it ſhould not be ill written. And ſo much for my occupations.

With reſpect to Morival D'Etallonde, I perfectly perceive your good intentions have been inſufficient to expel the prejudices of fanaticiſm from the brains of your *préſidens à mortier*. It is more difficult to render a doctor of laws rational, than to write the Henriade. If Morival be not inclined to do penance with a wax candle in his hand, let him come hither, and I will place him among the engineers, according to your recommendation. It were better to ſtudy Vauban and Cöhorn, than to act degradingly; eſpecially when innocent.

It ſeems to me that the progreſs of reaſon is more rapidly felt in Germany than in France; the cauſe of which is, that there are many eccleſiaſtics, and catholic biſhops, in Germany, who begin to be aſhamed of their ſuperſtitious cuſtoms: whereas, in France, the clergy form a diſtinct body in the ſtate; and all great bodies

are

are attached to ancient cuſtoms, even after their abuſes become known.

Nothing is talked of here but the coronation of Rheims, the ſtrange ceremonies obſerved there, and the holy vial, the hiſtory of which is worthy of the Laplanders. A ſage and enlightened prince might aboliſh both the holy vial and the ceremony of coronation itſelf.

I have ſeen two very amiable young Frenchmen here; the one of whom is M. de Laval Montmorency, and the other Clermont Gallerande. The latter eſpecially poſſeſſes vivacity of mind, to which is added a regular and prudent conduct. Inſtead of being preſent at the coronation, they travel. They have been with me into Pruſſia, from whence they went to Warſaw, with an intention to go to Vienna.

Le Kain is arrived here, and will play Oedipus, Oroſmanes, and Mahomet. He has been at Ferney; and I ſhall oblige him to tell me all he knows, and all he does not know, of every thing which has rendered this ſmall town ſo famous. I ſaw Aufreſne act laſt year; and, when I have ſeen Le Kain, I will tell you to whom I give the preference.

I have my houſe full of nieces, nephews, and grand nephews; and we muſt take them to the ſhow, to recompenſe them for the dulneſs which they

they might find in the company of an old man. It is neceſſary to do juſtice to ourſelves, and to render ourſelves ſupportable to youth. I ſpeak this of myſelf; you have the excluſive privilege of never growing old: even when ſome infirmities happen to attack your body, your mind is ſuperior to their aſſaults, and ſeems daily to acquire new powers.

May Minerva, Apollo, the Muſes, and the Graces watch over their moſt beautiful work; and may they long preſerve it, the loſs of which ages will not be able to repair! Theſe are the prayers of the hermit of Sans-Souci, in behalf of the patriarch of Ferney. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXXXII.

From the King.

Potſdam, July 24, 1775.

I HAVE juſt ſeen Le Kain. He has been obliged to tell me in what ſtate he found you; and I was glad to hear that you were walking in your garden, that your health is tolerably good, and that your converſation is more pleaſant even than your works. This cheerfulneſs,

fulneſs, which you ſtill preſerve, is the moſt certain proof that we ſhall long continue to poſſeſs you; for it is the elementary fire, the vital principle, which firſt begins to decline, when age undermines and ſaps the mechaniſm of our exiſtence. I do not therefore fear that the throne of Parnaſſus will become vacant ſo ſoon as might be ſuppoſed. I boldly appoint you my executor, and this gives me great pleaſure.

Le Kain has played the parts of Oedipus, Mahomet, and Oroſmanes. We have had Oedipus played twice. He is a very able performer, has a fine voice, his deportment is dignified, his geſticulation noble, and it is impoſſible to pay greater attention to the pantomime of the ſcene. But, ſhall I frankly tell you what impreſſion he made upon me?—I wiſh him to be a little leſs violent, and I ſhould then think him perfect.

I laſt year heard Aufreſne, who perhaps wants a little of that fire of which the other has too much. In what I ſay I conſult nature only, and not what is cuſtomary in France. However, I was unable to retain my tears, both in Oedipus and Zaire; for there are paſſages ſo affecting in the latter, and of ſo much terror in the former, that we cannot but be moved by the

the one, and ſhudder at the other. How great is the happineſs of the patriarch of Ferney, in having produced theſe maſter-pieces, and in having formed him whoſe powers convey his meaning in ſo ſuperior a manner on the ſtage!

There were many ſpectators at theſe performances; among the reſt, my ſiſter Amelia, princeſs Ferdinand, the landgrave of Heſſe, and your neighbour, the princeſs of Wirtemberg, who is come here, from Montbelliard, to hear Le Kain. My niece of Montbelliard tells me ſhe may ſome day happen to make a tour to Ferney, to ſee the author whoſe works are the delight of Europe; and I have very much encouraged her to gratify this worthy curioſity. Oh how ſerviceable is literature to ſociety! The belles lettres are the ſweeteſt recreation, after the labours of the day: they agreeably diſſipate the political fumes of the brain; they render the mind mild; they amuſe even women; they conſole the afflicted; and, in fine, they are the ſole remaining pleaſures of age bending under the burthen of time, and happy at having contracted habits of reading, in youth.

Our Germans have, in their turn, conceived the ambition of enjoying the advantages of the fine arts; they are endeavouring to equal Athens, Rome, Florence, and Paris. What-

ever love I may have for my country, I dare not ſay they have hitherto been ſucceſsful. They want two things; language, and taſte. Their language is too verboſe. People of faſhion ſpeak French; and a few ſcholaſtic pedants, and profeſſors, cannot impart thoſe eaſy turns, and poliſhed touches, which can only be acquired in faſhionable ſociety. To this add the diverſity of idioms; each province ſupports its own, and hitherto there is no decided preference.

The Germans are eſpecially in want of taſte; they have not yet been able to imitate the authors of the Auguſtan age, but make a vitiated mixture of the Roman, Engliſh, French, and Teutonic taſte. They are in great want of that nice diſcernment which ſeizes beauties wherever they may be found, and diſtinguiſhes the indifferent from the perfect, and the noble from the ſublime, ſo as to apply each to their correſponding parts. Provided the letter *r* do but occur often enough in their poetry, they believe their verſification to be harmonious; and their compoſitions are in general confuſed, and their ſtyle tumid. In hiſtory, they will not omit the moſt trifling circumſtance, however uſeleſs and inſignificant.

Their beſt writings are on civil law. With reſpect to philoſophy, ſince the writings of Leibnitz,

nitz, and the great monade of Wolf, no perſon meddles any more with the ſubject. They imagine they ſhall ſucceed in their theatrical efforts; but hitherto nothing perfect has appeared. Germany is at this time what the French were in the age of Francis I. A taſte for literature begins to expand, and we muſt wait till nature ſhall give birth to true genius; as ſhe did under the adminiſtrations of Richelieu and Mazarin. The ſoil that produced a Leibnitz may again be productive.

I ſhall not behold theſe fine days, but I can foreſee their poſſibility. You may tell me this is to you exceedingly indifferent, and that I propheſy very much at my eaſe, prolonging as far as I can the period of my prediction. But this is my manner of propheſying; and it is the moſt certain of manners, ſince no perſon can give me the lye.

For my own part, I am ſatisfied with having lived in the age of Voltaire. May he live; may he digeſt well; may he continue in good humour; and eſpecially may he never forget the recluſe of Sans-Souci! *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXXXIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, July, 1775.

IN a fortnight I ſhall depart to make the tour of Sileſia; nor ſhall I return before the 6th of September. If Morival will come here about that time, he may addreſs himſelf to colonel Coccei, who will preſent him to me. I eagerly ſeize this opportunity of giving you pleaſure, and at the ſame time of fixing the fortune of a man whom youthful thoughtleſſneſs had for ever ruined, in his own country. Men abuſe all things; and thus the laws, intended for the ſafety and liberty of the people, have been infected, in France, by the poiſon of fanaticiſm, and are become cruel and barbarous. Yet France is a civilized country. How can this contradiction be reconciled?

What! The land that produced De Thou, Gaſſendi, Deſcartes, Fontenelle, Voltaire, and D'Alembert, has it alſo produced men ſo fooliſh, and ſo mad, as to condemn young people to death, for not having bowed before the ſtatue of a carpenter Jew boy! Poſterity will think this enigma more difficult to be divined

vined than that of the Sphinx, which Oedipus explained. I will further own to you that the holy vial, and its hoſtages, and the cure of the king's evil, do but little honour to the eighteenth century.

Theſe ſaid miracles, performed by the Moſt Chriſtian Kings, were lately the topic of diſcourſe here; and my lord Marſhal told us that, during his embaſſy into France, he had met with foreigners who appeared to him to be Spaniards. Having an attachment to that nation, where he paſſed a part of his life, he aſked them why they came to Paris. One of them anſwered—We have heard, ſir, that the king of France has the gift of curing the evil, and we are come hither to be touched by his majeſty; but, to our misfortune, we have been informed that he is actually in a ſtate of mortal ſin; and thus we find ourſelves obliged to return, after having made a journey to no purpoſe.

You muſt, before this, have received a long letter, on the ſubject of Le Kain, who is to depart in a ſhort time, to act in a tragedy written by M. Guibert, the tactician at Verſailles. I have not ſeen the piece; but Le Kain pretends it is patronized by the queen of France, which muſt enſure it ſucceſs. This M. Guibert wiſhes to travel every road, in ſearch of fame: to

pluck the laurels of arms, and theatres, and the myrtle of Venus likewiſe, is a certain means of attaining immortality.

What he ſaw at Ferney, no doubt, encouraged him to this perilous undertaking; in which, for one who wins the garland, there are a thouſand who fail. To follow great examples, and to make great attempts, are praiſe-worthy acts; and M. Guibert will from theſe infallibly derive ſome advantage. Till we have firſt made the experiment, we are unacquainted with our own talents.

Your experiments have long ſince been made; you have nothing to do but to be ſomewhat ſparing of the oil in the lamp, that it may long continue to burn. In this I intereſt myſelf more than madam Denis, your Swiſs houſekeeper, who induces you to quit your labours, when ſhe fears they are injurious to your health. Few have any but confuſed ideas of the worth of the patriarch of Ferney: I have formed a more accurate judgment. To diſcover one Voltaire, in all antiquity, the various talents of five or ſix great men muſt be collected; a Cicero, a Virgil, a Lucian, and a Salluſt. And, ſince the revival of letters, it is ſtill the ſame; we muſt incorporate a Guicciardini, a Taſſo, an Aretinus, a Dante, and an Arioſto: nay, all theſe

are

are not yet ſufficient. During the age of Louis XIV. there ſtill was wanting an epic poet, to render the collection complete.

Thus do men think on the ſhores of the frozen Baltic, where greater juſtice is done to you than you have found in your own ungrateful country.

Forget not theſe good Germans, who always remember you with pleaſure, who recollect they formerly poſſeſſed you, and who do every thing in their power to celebrate your fame. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S. I have juſt received the *Diatribe* (or eſſay) to the author of *the Ephemerides*, which work it is ſaid comes from Ferney; and I think I have diſcovered the author, whoſe ſtyle cannot be diſguiſed.

LETTER CCCCXXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, July, 1775.

THERE is no virtue, be it paſſive, be it active, be it mild, proud, humane, or heroic, which is not practiſed by you. Here do we now ſee you buſy in providing amuſement for your family,

family, after having fought ſome fifty battles. You ſend for Le Kain and Aufreſne, to act before you. Paulus Emilius ſaid that the ſame mind was exerted in ordering a banquet as was in vanquiſhing king Perſes. You are ſuperior in all things, be it war or be it peace.

I thank you, in the immenſity of your cares, for kindly protecting D'Etallonde Morival, and for repairing the crime of his aſſaſſins: it is an act worthy of your majeſty. The great Julian, the firſt of mankind after Marcus Aurelius, did much the ſame; yet he was not your equal.

The bounty which you have extended, in behalf of Morival, is ſetting a great example to our nation, which begins to purify itſelf. Our preſent miniſters are moſt of them philoſophers. Abbé Galliani has affirmed that Rome could never recover ſome remains of ſplendor, till ſhe ſhould have an atheiſt for her pope; and it is at leaſt very certain that an atheiſtical ſucceſſor to Saint Peter would be much better than a ſuperſtitious pope.

We hope, in France, that philoſophy, which now ſurrounds the royal chamber, will ſoon gain entrance; yet this is but hope, and hope is often deceitful. There are ſo many people intereſted in the ſupport of error, and folly; there are ſo many dignities and ſo much wealth attached to

the holy trade, that it is to be feared the hypocrites will always be too potent for the ſages.

Has not your Germany itſelf erected your principal eccleſiaſtics into ſovereign princes? Where among you will you find the elector, or the biſhop, who will take the part of reaſon, againſt a ſect which ſhall beſtow an annual income of four or five millions? The laws of the whole earth muſt be overthrown, to reduce it to the empire of philoſophy. The only reſource therefore of the ſage is that of preventing fanatics from becoming too dangerous: this you effect by the ſtrength of your genius, and the knowledge which you poſſeſs of mankind.

Continue, ſire, long to live, and to afford the world new examples.

The public papers ſay Pölnitz is dead—'Tis a pity, and makes me fear for the lord marſhal, who is much his ſuperior as a man, and who is nearly his equal in age.

For my own part, I am kept alive by the conſolations which you deign to grant; and my greateſt bleſſing, when dying, will be to recollect that I leave you on earth, full of life, and reſplendent in glory.

I entreat your majeſty will deign to inform me whether I am to ſend Morival to Weſel, or to Potſdam.

Condeſcend

Condeſcend to accept my thanks, my admiration, and my reſpect.

LETTER CCCCXXXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Auguſt 3, 1775.

LE Kain can find the way to pleaſe
And gratify your days of eaſe;
He paints the hero's deeds with truth.
Thus Cæſar charm'd your early youth;
Aurelius now has won your heart.
Who does not love his counterpart?

The fineſt of ſpectacles, ſire, is to ſee a great man, ſurrounded by his family, quitting for a moment all the perplexities of a throne, to liſten to poetry, and the next moment writing better poetry than that which he had heard.

You ſeem to me to judge Germany with great accuracy, reſpecting the crowd of words which form a phraſe, the multitude of ſyllables which form a word, and that taſte which is as unformed as the language. It is yet twilight in Germany; it would have been broad day, had you condeſcended to write poetry in your own language.

It is ſingular enough that Le Kain and mademoiſelle Clairon ſhould both at once be with the

the Brandenburg family. But, while the talent of reciting French tragedy meets with indulgence from you, at Sans-Souci, Gluck is come to teach us muſic, at Paris; ſo that if we ſend you a Roſcius from France, you return us an Orpheus from Germany.

But from what part does Philoſophy come? From Potſdam, ſire; where you have induced her to take up her abode, and whence you have ſent her into moſt parts of Europe.

I know not yet whether our king will follow your footſteps; but I know that he has taken philoſophers for his miniſters, one only excepted, who has the misfortune to be a devotee *. We loſe good taſte, but we accquire the art of thinking. There is in particular one M. Turgot, who is worthy to converſe with your majeſty. The prieſts are in deſpair, and we ſee the commencement of a great revolution.

Hitherto however no one has dared openly to declare himſelf. The old palace of impoſture, which was founded 1775 years ago, is ſecretly undermined: were it formally beſieged, the infamous ſentence, which decreed the aſſaſſination of the chevalier La Barre, and Morival, would have been boldly annulled. It excites ſhame and indignation, but there it reſts. The

* M. de Muy.

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courage to condemn theſe execrable judges according to the *lex talionis* is ſtill wanting. A pardon was offered us, but this we would not accept.

You alone are truly great. I thank your majeſty with tears of tenderneſs and joy. I have requeſted your majeſty would iſſue your final commands; and for theſe I wait, to ſend that Morival to your feet with whom I hope you will be well ſatisfied.

Deign to preſerve your kindneſs for the old man whoſe health is not ſo good as Le Kain reports it to be.

LETTER CCCCXXXVI.

From the King.

Potſdam, Auguſt 13, 1775.

TO you muſt be attributed all the good that was intended to be done to Morival. The protector of Calas, and Sirven, deſerves to be equally ſucceſsful in favour of D'Etallonde. You in your retreat have enjoyed the uncommon advantage of correcting the cruel ſentences of your national judges, and of putting thoſe to the bluſh who, ſtationed near the throne, ought to

to have been the firſt to have acted as you have done. With reſpect to myſelf, I in my own country am ſatisfied with preventing the ſtrong from oppreſſing the weak, and in ſoftening ſentences which occaſionally appear to me to be too rigorous. This forms a part of my employment. When I travel through the provinces, all make application to me; I examine myſelf, and appoint others to examine, their complaints, and render myſelf uſeful to perſons of whoſe exiſtence I was ignorant, till I had received their petitions. This reviſion renders the judges more attentive, and prevents their proceedings from being too rigorous and unfeeling. I congratulate your nation on the good choice which Louis XVI. has made of his miniſters. It is the ſaying of one of the ancients, that the people will never be happy till they ſhall have ſages for their kings. If your miniſters be not entirely kings, they ſtill poſſeſs ſovereign authority. Your monarch has the beſt intentions; he wiſhes to do good; the creatures therefore moſt to be feared are thoſe peſts of the court who will endeavour to corrupt, and by degrees to vitiate, his mind. He is young; he is unacquainted with the refined ſtratagems which courtiers will employ, to wind him as they wiſh, and thus to gratify their intereſt, their hatred, and their ambition. In his infancy, he was ſent to the ſchool of fanaticiſm

ticiſm and imbecillity; and thus it is to be feared he will want reſolution to think for himſelf, and to examine that which he was taught ſtupidly to adore.

You have preached toleration, and, Bayle excepted, you, paſt contradiction, are one of the ſages who have done the moſt good to humanity. Yet, though you have enlightened mankind, thoſe who are by intereſt attached to ſuperſtition reject the truth; and theſe are the perſons who ſtill lord it over the people.

A faithful diſciple of the patriarch of Ferney, I am now actually negotiating with a thouſand Mahometan families; for whom I procure ſettlements, and moſques, in Weſt Pruſſia. We ſhall have legal ablutions, and ſhall hear *Ille Allah* ſung, without taking offence. This was the only ſect of which we had none in our country.

Old Pölnitz has died as he lived; that is to ſay, cheating on the very eve of his deceaſe. He is regretted by no one, except by his creditors.

As to our reſpectable and good lord marſhal, he is in excellent health: his honeſt mind is cheerful and happy, and I flatter myſelf we ſhall ſtill long preſerve him. His beneficent philoſophy is wholly exerted in doing good. All the Engliſh who come here go in pilgrimage to viſit him. He lives oppoſite the palace of

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Sans-Souci, univerſally eſteemed and beloved. Such is a happy old age.

All you have ſaid, concerning our Teutonic biſhops, is but too true; they are hogs fattened on the tythes of Sion. But you know likewiſe that, in the holy Roman empire, ancient cuſtom, the golden bull, and other ſimilar antique follies, cauſe eſtabliſhed abuſes to be reſpected. We ſee them, ſhrug up our ſhoulders, and ſuffer things to continue in their former train.

If we wiſh to diminiſh fanaticiſm, we muſt not begin by interfering with the biſhops; but, could we only diminiſh the monks, and eſpecially the begging friars, the zeal of the people would cool. Having become leſs ſuperſtitious, governments would be permitted then to take ſuch meaſures with the biſhops as ſhould moſt concur to the good of their ſtates. This is the only path to follow: ſilently to undermine the edifice of folly will be the moſt certain means to effect its fall.

The pope, his preſent ſituation conſidered, is obliged to grant briefs and bulls, ſuch as his dear children require him to grant. This power, founded on the ideal credit of the faith, will decline in proportion as faith itſelf ſhall decline. Were ſome miniſters, at the

ads of nations, but to be found ſuperior to

vulgar prejudices, the holy father would become a bankrupt. His letters of exchange, and his notes payable at ſight, have already loſt half their current value. Poſterity will no doubt enjoy the advantage of being allowed to think freely; and will not, like us, behold acts ſo horrid as thoſe which have been ſeen at Toulouſe, Abbeville, &c. The Morivals of that fortunate age will not have to dread the barbarities exerciſed on the Morival of the preſent.

You need only to ſend D'Etallonde immediately here. I conſider him as a victim eſcaped from the ſacrificing knife; or rather from the axe of the executioner.

I am on my departure for Sileſia, and ſhall not return before the 4th or the 5th of next month. He will therefore have time for his journey.

Let me be where I will, my prayers for the patriarch of Ferney will be ever the ſame; and, not being able to converſe with him, I ſhall on my road converſe with his works. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S. You travel with me without your own knowledge, and afford me pleaſure without any trouble to yourſelf; while I, as uſual, continue to bleſs you as I go.

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LETTER CCCCXXXVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, Auguſt 31, 1775.

I THIS day return your brave and circumſpect officer, D'Etallonde Morival, whom you have deigned to entruſt to me, during theſe laſt eighteen months. I will be his pledge that, ſeeing him at Potſdam, you will not diſcover the volatile and aſſuming airs of our pretended French marquiſes. His conduct, and his continual application to tactics and the art of fortification, the prudence of all his proceedings, of his diſcourſe, the mildneſs of his manners, and his good underſtanding, are all ſufficiently ſtrong proofs of the execrable and abſurd phrenzy of the ſentence of the three village judges, who condemned him, ten years ago, with the chevalier La Barre, to ſuch a death as Buſiris himſelf would never have dared to have imagined.

Leaving the rivals of Buſiris at Abbeville, he will in you find a Solon. Europe knows that the hero of Pruſſia has been its legiſlator; and, in the character of legiſlator, you have protected virtue, that was delivered up to the

executioner by fanaticiſm. It is to be ſuppoſed we ſhall never more ſee ſuch fearful atrocity in France, which has hitherto afforded ſo ſtrong and ſo frequent a contraſt to our levity; and that it will no longer be ſaid the gayeſt of people are the moſt barbarous.

We have a very wiſe miniſtry ſelected by a young king, who is not, but who wiſhes much to be, himſelf wiſe. This your majeſty has remarked, in your laſt letter of the 13th. Moſt of our faults and our misfortunes have originated in our ſubjection to ancient cuſtoms, honoured by the name of laws, in deſpite of our love of novelty. Our criminal juriſprudence, for example, is almoſt wholly founded on what is called canon law, and on the old proceedings of the inquiſition. Our laws are a mixture of ancient barbariſms, ill corrected by modern regulations. Our government hitherto has ever been like the city of Paris, an aſſemblage of palaces and ruins, magnificence and wretchedneſs, admirable beauties and diſguſting defects. A new built city only can be regular.

Your majeſty deigns to inform me that you condeſcend to travel with my poor works. I wiſh, notwithſtanding my age of eighty-two, I were in their place. I am obliged to inform you that ſeveral of the children that are baptiſed

tiſed in my name are none of mine. I know you have an edition printed at Lauſanne, in forty-two volumes, undertaken by two magiſtrates and two prieſts, who never once conſulted me. Should you happen to caſt your eye over the twenty-third volume, you will there find ſome thirty ſhort poems, which are truly worthy the coachman of *Vertamon*. There is no abſolute neceſſity that there ſhould be as much good taſte at Lauſanne as at Potſdam.

What I have written but little merits your attention. The mania of editors has buried me under loads of paper. Theſe people ruin themſelves by exceſs of zeal. I have a hundred times written to them that men never travel to poſterity with ſuch heavy baggage. They have diſregarded me, and have diſfigured ſuch letters of yours and mine as have got abroad. Behold me therefore now in folio, gnawn by rats and worms, like one of the fathers of the church.

Your majeſty is deſtined to ſee my eternal quarrels with men like Larcher, brother Nonotte, brother Freron, and brother Paulian; all illuſtrious Ex-Jeſuits. Such fine diſputes muſt be ſtrangely tireſome to the conqueror of ſo many nations, and the hiſtorian of his country. The Jeſuits declared war againſt me, even at

the time when they were puniſhed by your brother monarchs, of France and Spain. They were ſoldiers, diſperſed after defeat, who robbed a poor paſſenger, that they might have ſomething on which to exiſt.

The Jeſuits were bound in conſcience to perſecute me; for, before they were baniſhed from France and Spain, I had baniſhed them from my neighbourhood. On the frontiers of Berne, they had ſeized on the property of ſeven gentlemen, who were all brothers, of the name of Craſſi; all minors, all exceedingly poor, and all in the ſervice of the king of France. I had the good fortune to conſign over the neceſſary money, to enable them to recover poſſeſſion of their eſtate, uſurped by the Jeſuits. Such an act of impiety ſaint Ignatius never forgave. Since this time, Freron and La Beaumelle have re-written the Henriade; Paulian has written againſt the emperor Julian, and againſt me; and Nonotte, in two huge volumes, has accuſed me of having taken it amiſs that the *great* Conſtantine formerly aſſaſſinated his father-in-law, his brother-in-law, his nephew, his ſon, and his wife. I ſometimes had the weakneſs to anſwer theſe animals; and editors have had the folly to reprint ſuch nonſenſe, with which no one troubles himſelf.

Let me entreat your majeſty to act by this load of traſh as I have ſeen you act by ſo many other books; you took your ſciſſars, cut out the pages that diſpleaſed you, preſerved thoſe which could afford you amuſement, and thus reduced thirty volumes to one or two: an excellent method to cure authors of the rage of writing too much.

The baron de Pölnitz, ſire, is dead then at laſt. He likewiſe was an author; and, like him, Freron, Nonotte, and I, muſt all end: we muſt be ſeen no more. There are only certain names which will eſcape oblivion. Such, for example, as Guſtavus Adolphus; and another, ſuperior in my opinion to him, whoſe victorious hands I at a diſtance kiſs, who has written things ſo ingenious and ſo uſeful, and who protects innocence and diſperſes his benefits.

LETTER CCCCXXXVIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 8, 1775.

I AM very much obliged to you for the pleaſure you have given me, on my journey into Sileſia. You muſt be confeſſed to be good

company. While converſing with you, we gain both inſtruction and amuſement. I and Voltaire have made the tour of Sileſia, and have returned together.

As to Le Kain—

In lines which he does but repeat,
How oft do I their author meet;
His noble mind, his dauntleſs ſoul;
He who the paſſions can controul,
Can tears command, with wondrous art,
And ſtrike his terrors through the heart!
And wo to him who ſits and hears,
Yet has no terrors, has no fears;
Who grief regards with proud diſdain,
And torture views devoid of pain!
Be feeling mine whene'er it can;
I love to know I'm ſtill a man.

This is an exact deſcription of the pleaſure which the repreſentation of your tragedies afford. Le Kain has contributed to increaſe it, no doubt, by his action and recital; but, even had they been performed by inferior actors, the pathos would ſtill have overcome all deficiencies. I might act as prompter to your pieces, for there are many of them that I know by rote. Should I be unable to make my fortune in any other manner, on this earth, this trade ſhould be my laſt reſource. It is good to have two ſtrings to our bow.

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I am not well acquainted with the preſent ſtate of the court of Verſailles, nor do I know what is paſſing there, except in the groſs. I have no knowledge either of Turgot or Maleſherbes; but, if they be true philoſophers, they are in their proper places. Neither prejudice nor paſſion ought to interfere in buſineſs; the only paſſion that can be allowable is a paſſion for the public good. Thus thought Marcus Aurelius, and ſo ought every ſovereign to think, who wiſhes to do his duty.

Your young king is toſſed upon a tempeſtuous ſea; ſtrength of mind and genius are requiſite, for him to form and to ſupport a rational ſyſtem. Maurepas is overloaded with years; he muſt ſoon have a ſucceſſor; and it will then be ſeen on whom the choice of the monarch will alight, and whether the old proverb will be falſified—"Shew me thy companions, and I "will tell thee thy fortune."

I have lately ſeen a M. Laval Monmorency, and one Clermont Gallerande, in Sileſia, who have informed me that France begins to be familiariſed with toleration; and that there were thoughts of re-eſtabliſhing the edict of Nantz, which has ſo long been ſuppreſſed. My only anſwer to them was that the muſtard came when dinner was over. You will take me for D'Argen-

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ſon-la-paix, who treated of ſtate affairs in proverbs; but a letter is not a negociation, and we may ſometimes be permitted to unbend in company. You certainly do not wiſh me to affect the heavy air of your long-robed lawyers, or of our grave deputies of Ratiſbonne. The firſt were the executioners of La Barre; and the latter, with their viſitations, are guilty of another kind of folly.

You may very well ſay that our good Germans are ſtill in the twilight of knowledge. Germany is now, relatively to the fine arts, what your country was under Francis I. The arts are loved and ſought after; foreigners tranſplant them among us; but the ſoil is not ſufficiently prepared to be ſelf-productive. The thirty years war was more injurious to Germany than foreigners have imagined. It was neceſſary to begin by cultivating the land, next to apply to manufactures, and finally to obtain ſome trifling commerce. In proportion as theſe plans gain ſtrength, a degree of welfare ſprings up, which is followed by increaſing opulence, without which the arts cannot proſper. It is the will of the Muſes that the waters of Pactolus ſhould waſh the feet of the Parnaſſian mount. We muſt firſt be at our eaſe before we can gain knowledge, and think freely. Thus Athens

was

was ſuperior to Sparta, in what related to ſcience and the fine arts.

Taſte will not extend itſelf through Germany, till the claſſic authors, Greek, Roman, and French, ſhall have been maturely ſtudied. Two or three men of genius will correct the language, will render it leſs barbarous, and will naturaliſe thoſe maſterpieces of literature which other nations have produced.

For my part, my end approaches, and I ſhall never ſee theſe fortunate times. Moſt willingly would I have contributed to their birth; but what could a being effect, who, during three parts of his career, was diſturbed by continual wars, was obliged to repair the evils theſe wars had occaſioned, and who was born with talents inſufficient for enterprizes ſo great? Philoſophy has deſcended to us from Epicurus, and has been improved by Gaſſendi, Newton, and Locke. I do myſelf the honour of being their diſciple, but nothing more.

On blindneſs and a world of night
You pour a ſplendid flood of light,
From fears which bigot fools receive,
Poor trembling mortals you relieve;
And wield the ſword of truth ſo well
That error and her crew you quell.

It is to your precurſor, Bayle, and to yourſelf, indubitably, that the glory is due of the revolution which has been effected in the human mind. But let us confeſs the truth—this revolution is not complete; the bigots have their partiſans: and it never will be completed, except by ſuperior force. The ſentence which muſt cruſh the *infamous* —— muſt be pronounced by government. Enlightened miniſters may greatly contribute, but the will of the ſovereign muſt be added. This no doubt will happen in time; but neither you nor I will be the ſpectators of the ſo much wiſhed for moment.

I am in expectation of D'Etallonde. You muſt before this have received my anſwers, and I ſuppoſe him on the road. I ſhall do for him, or rather for you, whatever depends on me. He is the martyr of ſuperſtition, and merits to be the ſaint of philoſophy.

I will not free myſelf from my preſent error; I will believe Le Kain: it is my wiſh, my hope, my will, that you ſhould remain with us as long as poſſible. You are too great an ornament to your age for me to be indifferent to your exiſtence. Live, and do not forget the hermit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S.

P. S. I am aſhamed of ſending you my poetry, for this is to caſt a drop of muddy water into a clear fountain. But I will efface my blunders, by doing good to the martyr of philoſophy, *Divus Etallundus*.

LETTER CCCCXXXIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 29, 1775.

THE beſt recommendation Morival can bring will be to tell me that he left the patriarch of Ferney in perfect health. He will undergo a long interrogation, on this ſubject; for there are beings privileged by nature, concerning whom the leaſt circumſtances become intereſting. From him I ſhall learn the progreſs of the fair which is eſtabliſhed in your parts; the increaſe of the watch trade; the erecting of a new theatre; and every thing that relates to the philoſopher with whom he has paſſed eighteen months; months the moſt remarkable, and the moſt precious, of the life of Morival.

I ſhall then come to his own hiſtory, of which I know nothing, except what I found in a memorial, by Loiſeau. True it is that the ſentence

tence of Abbeville * is revolting to humanity, and that the inquiſition of Rome would have been leſs ſevere. But men imagine every thing is lawful, when they ſuppoſe they are fighting for the glory of God; and they ſully the altars of a beneficent Being, by the blood of innocent victims.

If ſuch horrors can ever ſtand excuſed, it is during the effervescence of ſome new ſect of fanaticiſm. But ſuch madneſs becomes additionally atrocious, when committed in cold blood, and when the paſſions are unconcerned. Poſterity will find it difficult to believe that the eighteenth century beheld the moſt abſurd bigotry ſtifling the cries of reaſon, of nature, and of humanity. Morival is happy, in having eſcaped the claws of theſe ſanctified anthropophagi. It were better to live with a horde of Laplanders than among the monſters of Abbeville.

A king with upright views, and a ſage miniſtry, ſimilar to that which you have at preſent in France, will no doubt impede the execution of iniquitous ſentences; nor will they allow the laws of France and of the Crim-Tartars to reſemble each other. They will notwithſtanding

* Inſtead of Abbeville, the Berlin edition uniformly, but erroneouſly, reads Amiens. T.

continually

continually have to oppoſe the clergy, who are armed with the ſanctified name of the holy catholic, apoſtolic, and Roman religion. I think I behold a biſhop riſing, among this herd of prieſts, and thus addreſſing the XVIth Louis:

"Sire, you are the only king on earth who "bears the title of Moſt Chriſtian. Your arm "wields the flaming ſword of God, which is "given you for the defence of the church. Re-"ligion is treated outrageouſly, and claims "your aſſiſtance. The blood of the guilty "muſt be ſhed, to expiate the offence; as be-"comes the firſt and the moſt ancient monar-"chy on earth."

I can aſſure you, though the encyclopediſts themſelves were all preſent at this harangue, they would be unable to wreſt from the hands of the prieſts the victim whom theſe barbarians ſhould have determined to immolate.

If crimes ſo offenſive be leſs frequently committed in other parts than in France, it muſt be attributed to the impaſſioned temper of your nation, which always leads them to extremes. It is not in France alone that a mixture of objects is found, part of which excite admiration, and the remainder blame; I believe it to be every where the ſame. Man being himſelf imperfect, how can his works be otherwiſe?

Your kingdom has been ſubjugated by the Romans,

Romans, the Salii, the Franks, the Engliſh, and by ſuperſtition. Each of theſe conquerors has promulgated laws, the aſſemblage of which has rendered your juriſprudence a chaos. To act properly, you muſt level the fabric with the ground, and build anew. Whoever ſhould undertake this would have to encounter cuſtom, prejudice, and the whole people, who are attached to ancient uſage, without being able to eſtimate its real worth; and who imagine that to reform and to overturn the kingdom would be one and the ſame thing.

If I do not miſtake, you approve the preſent government of Penſylvania, which has only exiſted within a century. Add five or ſix centuries more to its duration, and you would no longer know it to be the ſame. So true is it that *mutability* is one of the *permanent* laws of the world. Were philoſophers to form the moſt wiſe of governments, it would have the ſame fate. Nay, are philoſophers themſelves always free from error? Have they not propagated their errors? Witneſs the ſubſtantial forms of Ariſtotle, the olio of Plato, the vortices of Deſcartes, and the monades of Leibnitz. What might I not ſay of the paradoxes with which Jean Jacques has regaled Europe? Granting however the man who has turned the brain of ſome good fathers of families, ſo far as to induce

duce them to educate their children according to the precepts of his Emilius, to be a philoſopher.

The reſult of all theſe examples is that, in deſpite of the beſt intentions and all poſſible labours, men never can arrive at perfection, of any kind whatever.

But I am abandoning myſelf to a flux of words. I am troubled with a *logo-diarrhea*, and am ineffectually ſpoiling paper, to repeat things with which you are better acquainted than I am. I have only one excuſe, and that is, were we confined to write only on things with which you are unacquainted, we ſhould have nothing left to ſay. Here however follows one.

You wiſh to know on what we converſed, on our journey into Sileſia. Be pleaſed to learn then that you have recited Merope and Mahomet to me; and, when the jogging of the carriage was too violent, I learnt thoſe paſſages by rote with which I was moſt ſtruck. Thus as I rode did I employ myſelf, occaſionally exclaiming—"Bleſſed be this happy genius! who, pre-"ſent or abſent, fails not to yield me equal "pleaſure!"

I have accuſtomed myſelf to read and re-read your works: the polemical pieces they contain may have been neceſſary, at the times in which

they were written; but ſuch people as Desfontaines, Freron, Paulian, and La Beaumelle, never will prevent writings like the Henriade, Oedipus, Brutus, Zaire, Alzira, Merope, Semiramis, the Comte de Foix, Oreſtes, and Mahomet, from deſcending, with high renown, to poſterity; or from being numbered among thoſe claſſical performances with which Athens, Rome, Florence, and Paris have embelliſhed literature. This is a truth on which all men of taſte are unanimous, and not any compliment invented by me. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXL.

From the King.

Potſdam, October 22, 1775.

THE gout has held me bound in bed for theſe four weeks, for I have had it in both my feet, both my knees, both my hands, and, as an additional favour, in my elbow. At preſent the fever and the pain are gone, and I no longer ſuffer, except from great weakneſs. During my fit, I received two charming letters from Ferney; but, had they come from the great *Demiourgos*,

miourgos, I ſhould have been unable ſo much as to dictate an anſwer. I have formed an acquaintance with Apollo, the God of phyſic; but Apollo, the God of poetry, ſhould he ever inſpire me, will not confer his favours, till my body ſhall have recovered ſufficient force to communicate power to my mind.

Divus Etallundus is juſt arrived; a youth wreſted from the gripe of the *infamous* —— and the flames of the inquiſition. He was very well received, becauſe he aſſured me that the phyſicians granted ſtill ten years exiſtence to his generous defender, the ſage of Mount Jura, who taught the Gauls to bluſh at their laws, and their barbarous proceedings. D'Etallonde affirms that you have more oil in your lamp than all the virgins of the goſpel had. May it never be exhauſted; and may your body ſubſiſt in proportion to the duration of your fame! You will then have a view of immortality.

I wait the return of my ſtrength, and my thoughts, to write to you in a leſs laconic ſtyle; aſſuring you that the valetudinarian of Sans-Souci will ever love the patriarch of Ferney. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCXLI.

From the King.

October 24, 1775.

I HAVE lately by chance read a criticiſm on the Henriade, the authors of which are La Beaumelle and Freron. I had the patience to run over the remarks, which rather breathe the ſpirit of a wiſh to injure, than that of juſtice and impartiality. I thought theſe deſcendants of Zoilus had diſperſed their whole venom in their notes; but how great was my ſurpriſe to find half cantos of their own compoſition, which they pretended ought to be inſerted in the poem. Theſe additions are ſo dry and barren, that they are undeſerving of being read. I, who am far from poſſeſſing the critical acumen of D'Olivet, am able to write well-founded remarks on them; ſo deteſtable is their verſification. The ſtupidity, low jealouſy, and malignity of theſe inſects of Parnaſſus led me to imagine the following fable:

An Aſs was grazing near the grove
Where Philomela ſang of love;
Young April heard her wo-worn fears,
And paid the ſong with pitying tears.

Grown

Grown envious of her juſt applauſe,
Balaam a mad concluſion draws:
"Let me," ſaid he, "the prize conteſt;
"Who ſings the loudeſt ſings the beſt.
"Silence! I'll quickly end this matter!"
Aſſes, themſelves, themſelves can flatter.
The birds ſat round, each on his ſpray;
The aſs hem'd thrice, and 'gan to bray.
Unus'd to hear ſuch aſſes ſing,
His frighten'd hearers all took wing,
And left the fooliſh, long-ear'd elf
To ſing and look juſt like himſelf.

Let dunce who for a wit would paſs
Wiſely take warning from an aſs.

Perhaps my poetry is little better than that of the gentlemen your critics; but it contains ſome truths, which might lower their exceſſive vanity. Let us however forget theſe abortions of Zoilus.

I flatter myſelf I am the firſt to congratulate you, as Intendant of the country of Gex, with which dignity you are honoured, and on the erection of your eſtate at Ferney into a marquiſate. You, by your merits, oblige your country to teſtify its gratitude. I take part in every thing advantageous which happens to our good patriarch; and I entreat he would occaſionally remember the hermit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

LETTER CCCCXLII.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 4, 1775.

NONE of your letters have given me ſo much pleaſure as that which I have juſt received; it relieves me from fears to which the news of your illneſs had given birth. The patriarch of Ferney muſt live long, for the glory of literature, and for the honour of the eighteenth century. I have twenty-ſix years ſurvived an apoplectic attack, which I had in the year 1749: I hope you will do the ſame. The diſeaſe called demy-apoplexy is not very dangerous; and, by obſerving a good regimen, and renouncing ſuppers, I hope we ſhall be able long to preſerve you, for the ſatisfaction of all thinking beings.

You aſk me what is mind. Alas! I can tell you many things which it is not. I have ſo little myſelf that it would greatly perplex me to give a definition of it. If however you wiſh me, for your amuſement, to write my romance, like others, I will adhere to ſuch notions as I have been taught, by experience.

I am very certain that I am not double. I therefore

therefore conſider myſelf as one ſingle being. I know myſelf to be a material, animated, and organized animal, capable of thought. Hence I conclude that animated matter may think; as well as it may poſſeſs the property of being electrical.

I perceive that the life of the animal depends on heat and motion: I therefore ſuſpect that a portion of elementary fire may well be the cauſe of both theſe phenomena. I attribute thought to the five ſenſes, which nature has beſtowed on us. The ideas which they communicate are impreſſed on the nerves, which are their meſſengers: theſe impreſſions, by us called memory, furniſh us with ideas.

The heat of the elementary fire, which keeps the blood in perpetual agitation, awakens theſe ideas, and occaſions imagination. According as this motion is vivid and eaſy, the thoughts ſucceed each other with rapidity. Should the motion be ſlow and difficult, the thoughts tardily follow.

I am confirmed in this opinion by ſleep; during which, when perfect, the blood circulates ſo gently that the ideas are as it were benumbed, the nerves of the underſtanding are relaxed, and the ſoul remains as if annihilated.

When the blood circulates too vehemently in

the brain, as in drunkards, or during inflammatory fevers, it confounds and overturns the ideas. Should ſome ſmall obſtruction be formed in the nerves of the brain, it occaſions madneſs. Should a drop of water be dilated in the cranium, the loſs of memory is the conſequence. Should a drop of extravaſated blood preſs upon the brain and the nerves of the underſtanding, this brings on apoplexy.

You perceive I examine the ſoul rather as a phyſician than a metaphyſician. I abide by theſe probabilities, being in want of better. I am ſatisfied to enjoy the fruits of your underſtanding, of your reviving imagination, and your fine genius, without troubling myſelf to aſk whether theſe admirable gifts originate in innate ideas; whether God inſpire you with all your thoughts; or, whether you are a clock, the hand of which points toward Henry the Great, while your bells chime forth the Henriade.

Let others form labyrinths for themſelves, in which to wander. I delight in your works, and I bleſs the Being of beings, for having rendered me your cotemporary.

I have long been unable to write to you. I am now recovering from my fourteenth fit of the gout: never have I been worſe treated by it, for it has deprived me of the uſe of half of my limbs.

All

All this has not prevented me from ſeeing Morival, and long converſing with him, relative to you. It is but right that we ſhould feaſt our martyrs; they ſuffer for the truth; former martyrs were only the victims of error and ſuperſtition. I am in daily expectation that Morival will work miracles: the greateſt he could perform would be to confound and to incite remorſe in thoſe iniquitous judges, who condemned him to ſuffer a dreadful death.

I enjoy the favour which the king of France has granted to M. de Saint Germain. I have long been acquainted with this brave officer, nor will he render himſelf unworthy of the place he has obtained. He poſſeſſes the merit which is neceſſary to act with propriety in it, as well as a laudable zeal for the public good, which cannot but be a recommendation to him, with all worthy people.

I congratulate you, my dear Voltaire, at the ſame time; for I am aſſured that you are become director of the impoſts, in the country of Gex, that you reduce all taxes to one, and that the example which you give, of this ſimplification, will be introduced through all France. Men of mind are proper for every employment. A juſt turn of reaſoning, clear ideas, and a little labour, are equally ſerviceable inſtruments

ments in the arts, in war, in finance, and in commerce.

Thus will the man whoſe imagination brought forth the Henriade, Oedipus, and ſo many other admirable tragedies; thus will the tranſlator of Newton, the author of the Eſſay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations, the oracle of toleration, the rival of Arioſto, be the teacher of his nation, in the art of relieving the people, and in the true mode of impoſing taxes.

We are not exceedingly well acquainted with the life of Homer, but Virgil was nothing more than a poet. Racine did not write well in proſe, and Milton was but the ſlave of the tyrant of his country. You are the only man who have united talents ſo various.

Live therefore to enlighten your country, in this your new career. To you ſhe is indebted for her taſte and her reaſon; and to you is the huſbandman indebted for his welfare. What good is it poſſible you ſhould do more? Except that of not forgetting the hermit of Sans-Souci, who loves you too much for you not to love him a little. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCCCXLIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 5, 1775.

I HAVE a thouſand obligations to you, for the ſeed which you have been kind enough to ſend me. Who would have ſaid that our correſpondence would relate to the art of Triptolemus; and that the queſtion between us would be who ſhould cultivate his field the beſt? This however is the firſt of arts, without which there would neither be merchants, kings, courtiers, poets, nor philoſophers. There are no true riches but thoſe which the earth produces. To improve our lands, to clear uncultivated grounds, and to drain marſhes, is to make conqueſts on barbariſm, and procure ſubſiſtence for coloniſts; who, finding themſelves enabled to marry, cheerfully labour in the propagation of their ſpecies, and increaſe the number of the working citizens.

We have here imitated the artificial meadows of the Engliſh, which has ſucceeded exceedingly well, and has augmented our cattle one third. Their plough and their *ſemoir* * have not been equally ſucceſsful; the plough, becauſe

* Sowing machine, as I imagine. T.

our

our lands are in part too light; and the *ſemoir*, becauſe it is too dear for the farmers and the peaſants.

In revenge, we have learned how to cultivate rhubarb in our gardens, in which it preſerves all its native properties, and for uſe is nothing different to that which is brought out of eaſtern countries.

We have this year obtained ten thouſand pounds weight of ſilk, and have increaſed our bee-hives one third.

Theſe are the play-things of my old age; pleaſures which a mind and an imagination almoſt extinct may ſtill enjoy. Every man is not allotted, like you, to be immortal; our good patriarch is ever the ſame. For my own part, I have already packed off a part of my memory, the little imagination I had, and my legs, toward the Cocytean ſhores. The heavy baggage is ſent away in the van, and the main body will ſoon follow. This is a diſpoſition of the rear guard, which would meet with approbation from *Feuquières* and M. de Saint Germain.

I hope you will continue to ſend me good news of your health, which certainly is not a thing indifferent to me; and that you will occaſionally remember the hermit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

LET-

LETTER CCCCXLIV.

From the King.

December 13, 1775.

THE courier of the Lower Rhine often writes nonſenſe from Cleves, but rarely the reverſe. We have hitherto been ſatisfied with reſtraining his pen, which is ſometimes too daring, in what relates to monarchs. As I never read his papers, I am totally ignorant of their contents. If he think proper to write the apology of the judges, and the proſecution of the unfortunate La Barre, he will afford the public an ill opinion, either of his moral character or of his judgment. It was a permitted cuſtom, among the Romans, to plead the cauſe of the accuſed, the crimes of whom were doubtful; but the advocates refuſed to appear for the vile Hortenſius, and would not undertake the defence of Verres, being convinced of his wicked actions: and Cicero informs us that he, for the ſame reaſon, abandoned the ſlave of Oppianicus, for whom he had begun to plead.

I cannot cite more illuſtrious examples, to the gazette writer of Cleves, than thoſe of two Roman conſuls, to equal whom he muſt reſolve to

to read his recantation; and I hope the miniſters will have ſufficient influence over him to induce him generouſly to retract.

Morival is at Berlin, where he ſtudies mathematics and fortification, under an able profeſſor. He may furniſh the miniſters with a memorial, which may be employed to condemn the falſehoods of the news-writer.

But you enquire concerning my health, and you do not tell me the ſtate of your own. This is not acting well. I have no diſeaſe except the gout, which is driven off by regimen and patience; but you have unfortunately been attacked by a more dangerous malady. You ſuppoſe us to be lukewarm in what concerns your health, but there you are deceived; there are ſome good ſouls who fear, with me, leſt the throne of Parnaſſus ſhould become vacant.

I have received a letter from Grimm, who has ſeen you; which letter does not ſufficiently relieve me from my fears. The old patriarch of Ferney muſt write and inform me himſelf that he finds himſelf better; and thus, under his own hand, relieve my diſquietude. Believe me you owe me this conſolation, as to the man who, of all your admirers, is he who does you the moſt juſtice. *Vale.*

LET-

LETTER CCCCXLV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, December 21, 1775.

THERE never was either king or gouty patient more philoſophic than yourſelf. You ſeem to reſemble the man who ſaid—"No; the "gout is not an evil." Your reflections on that machine which, I know not how or why, has the faculty of ſneezing through the noſe, and of thinking in the brain, are of more worth than every thing which the doctors, learned in Greek and Hebrew, have ever uttered, on the ſame ſubject.

Your majeſty at preſent reſembles Xenophon, who employed the leiſure of peace in the labours of agriculture; except that it is not, with you, after the retreat of the ten thouſand, but after the victories of the fifty thouſand.

I believe you will find ſome trouble, in rendering your ſands of Brandenburg equal, in fertility, to the rich plains of Babylon; though in my opinion you are much ſuperior, in worth, to all the kings of that country. But your cares will at leaſt render the New March, and Pomerania, more fruitful than the country of Solo-

mon, which has been ſo very erroneouſly called the Promiſed Land, and which was even more ſandy than the road from Berlin to Sans-Souci.

Your majeſty is too good, when you deign to caſt your eyes over my trifling ruſtic labours. While you approve you encourage. I have but a ſmall bit of land to clear; add to which, it is one of the moſt barren ſpots in Europe. In like manner you deign to encourage my paltry intellectual faculties, by perſuading me that a demy-apoplexy is but a trifle. I never knew that your majeſty had faced ſuch an enemy; but him, like every other, you have vanquiſhed. Nay, you have juſt triumphed over the gout, who is a more formidable foe. Seated high in genius, you deign to ſtretch out a protecting hand to my ſmall machine. In a little time I ſhall be bold enough to lay at your feet ſome letters, which are tolerably ſcientific, and tolerably ridiculous, and which I have taken the liberty to addreſs to M. Paw, concerning his Chineſe, his Egyptians, and his Indians.

The barbarous adventure of general Lalli, and the diſaſters and the knaveries of our Eaſt-India company, have enabled me to gain information in many things, relative to India, and the ancient Bramins. To me it has appeared evident that our holy Chriſtian religion is en-

tirely founded on the ancient religion of the Bramins. Our fallen angels, who have given birth to the devil; and the devil, who has given birth to the damnation of all the human race, together with the death of God, for an apple, are nothing more than a wretched and cold copy of the ancient Indian theology. I dare aſſure your majeſty you will find this to be demonſtrated.

I am unacquainted with M. Paw. My letters are thoſe of a petty Benedictine friar, very different from thoſe of M. Pernetti. I think M. Paw a very able man, full of underſtanding and imagination; a little ſyſtematic, it muſt be owned, but one in whoſe company we may find amuſement and inſtruction.

I hope in a month or two to lay this ſhort work, by ſaint Benedict, at your feet.

I am told that a very good tranſlation is printing at Berlin of Ammianus Marcellinus, with inſtructive notes. As this Ammianus Marcellinus was the cotemporary of the great Julian, whom our wretched prieſts no longer dare to call the apoſtate, ſuffer me, ſire, to take a liberty with one to whom nothing is in my opinion wanting, to be in all things very ſuperior to this Julian, except that of doing much the ſame as he did, and which I dare not name.

This liberty is to entreat your majeſty to command them to ſend me, by favour of Michelet and Gerard, a copy of the work.

I moſt humbly demand pardon for my imprudence. Whatever relates to Julian is to me precious; but your favours are ſtill more ſo.

I throw myſelf at your feet more ardently than ever, and I hope they are not at preſent the leaſt ſwelled.

LETTER CCCCXLVI.

From the King.

January 10, 1776.

YOUR letter arrived very ſeaſonably: the gazette writers had all of them alarmed us, by the news which they publiſhed concerning your illneſs. I am delighted to find they have, according to their noble cuſtom, lied on this ſubject. The laſt accident which has happened to you will oblige you to be more careful than you have hitherto been. It is my opinion we ought to be ſatisfied with one meal a day, and that we ſhould dine at noon, to leave the ſtomach time to finiſh its digeſtion before ſleep.

I have received a preſent of ſome balſam of Mecca,

Mecca, from the grand ſignior: it comes from the firſt hand; and, ſhould your phyſician think the uſe of it may do you good, I will very willingly ſend you a bottle of this balſam.

I have ſent the book which you requeſt. The tranſlator complains of the obſcurity of his original, and it has been with the utmoſt difficulty that he could divine the meaning of ſome paſſages. Our good academicians apply themſelves to tranſlation, by which they give me pleaſure; for they will enable me to read the works of the ancients, which have hitherto either been ill tranſlated, tranſlated in obſolete French, or not tranſlated at all. Books are the baubles of my old age, and the reading of them is the ſole pleaſure I enjoy.

I own that, Lybia excepted, few parts of the world can vaunt of equalling us in ſands. We have however this year cleared ſeventy-ſix thouſand acres of meadow land; which meadows will give food to ſeven thouſand cows, the manure from which will fatten and improve our ſands, and our harveſts will increaſe. I know it is not given for man to change the nature of things; but I think that, by the efforts of induſtry and labour, we may be able to correct a barren ſoil, and even render it tolerable. With this we will content ourſelves.

I have read your letter to the abbé, who was much affected by the obliging things you have written in his favour. He eſteems and admires you; but I do not believe he will change his opinion, reſpecting the Chineſe. He ſays he will place more confidence in the Ex-Jeſuit Parennin, who has been in this country, than in the patriarch of Ferney, who never ſet foot there. You will ſuffer me to obſerve a neutrality, and to abandon the Chineſe and their cauſe to thoſe advocates who ſhall plead pro and con. The emperor of China certainly does not ſuſpect that his nation is, as a final appeal, to be judged in Europe; and that perſons who never had a glance of Pekin are to decide on the reputation of his empire. It muſt be confeſſed that the Europeans are more curious than the inhabitants of the other parts of our globe. They travel every where; they wiſh to know all things; they attempt to convert all the nations among whom they reſide; and they make an eſtimate of the merit of each province.

I impatiently wait the works which you will kindly ſend me. You know how much I eſteem every thing which is the product of your pen; but at the ſame time I avow my exceſſive ignorance of the manners of the nations of India, of Japan, and of China. I have chiefly con-

fined

fined myſelf to Europe, the knowledge of which is daily and neceſſarily brought into practice. Whatever I might have collected relative to the Indians, the Arabians, and the people of Japan, would but have been the object of vain and erudite curioſity. I have no acquaintance with the emperor of China, except with the bad poetry which is attributed to him. If he have no better poets at Pekin, no man will ever ſtudy the language in order to read ſuch verſes; and, till it ſhall pleaſe fate to give birth to a genius like Voltaire in that country, I ſhall trouble myſelf little concerning the reſt. Live therefore, my dear marquis, and my dear intendant, for the relief of the country of Gex, and to ſet an example to France of a philoſophic government, as well as for the ſatisfaction of all thoſe who, like me, warmly intereſt themſelves in the preſervation of the Proteus of Ferney. *Vale.*

LETTER CCCCXLVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, January 17, 1776.

THERE was formerly, about the fifty-third degree of latitude, a noble eagle, the flight

of which was admired through all the latitudes on earth. A little mouſe had left his hole to contemplate the eagle, and was ſeized with a moſt violent paſſion for the king of birds. The mouſe afterward grew old, in his hiding place, and was obliged to live on gnawing books; and theſe he gnawed very ill, for he had loſt all his teeth. The eagle ſtill preſerved his royal beak, but was diſeaſed in his claws.

I muſt here relate what will never be believed. This eagle, while he was ill, occaſionally amuſed himſelf with writing charming poetry, which he deigned to ſend to the mouſe. But, ſince the oaks of Ovid could ſpeak, why might not an eagle write poetry? The mouſe, become decrepit, could write nothing but proſe; but he took the liberty to ſend ſome extracts from an ancient book, which he had found in a library, to his old patron, the eagle. The fragments he ſent began at page eighty-ſix.

The things mentioned in theſe fragments were very true, and very ſingular. The mouſe ſuppoſed it poſſible they might amuſe the eagle; if he were deceived, he yet might merit pardon, for his intentions were really good. He could not diſcover truth with an eagle glance, but he loved it with all his heart: it was even to promote truth, and to gain a nearer ſight of it,

it, that he once made a journey to the middle region of the air, to put himſelf under the protection of his eagle, to whom he attached himſelf with the utmoſt reſpect and affection, till ſuch time as he was attacked and torn by cats.

P. S. If by chance his majeſty, the eagle, ſhould find entertainment in theſe trifles, his old vaſſal, the mouſe, will ſend the whole work by the poſt waggons, as ſoon as it ſhall be printed.

LETTER CCCCXLVIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 13, 1776.

THE fable of the mouſe and the eagle is certainly equal to that of the aſs and the nightingale. The eagle would moſt willingly trade with the mouſe, if he by barter could appropriate to himſelf the uncommon talents of the latter; but all men cannot viſit Corinth, nor can every man at will become a Proteus.

In fable, the offspring of Greece,
God Proteus how much we admire,
Whoſe art could aſſume ev'ry ſhape,
Who himſelf could transform at deſire.

As a tale of paſt times this was heard;
But of infidel error beware!
For the God, whom old Fable had feign'd,
Now acts, now exiſts in Voltaire.

In effect there is no change of which you are not capable; and, in order to render yourſelf completely univerſal, nothing is wanting to the world but a work, written by you, on tactics. This I am in continual expectation of, as the reſult of your univerſality.

I have read the pamphlet you have ſent me, and I hope you will be kind enough to add the continuation, which no doubt will contain very curious diſcoveries, and deductions

I have juſt had another violent fit of the gout, which has reduced me very low. I muſt wait for the fine weather to come to my aid, and reſtore my ſtrength.

In the mean time the marquis of Ferney, intendant of the country of Gex, will eaſe the people of the burthen of taxes, will regulate the *corvées*, and will afford a ſpecimen of what might contribute to ſecure the happineſs of the Gauls. I conclude my letter as Boileau did his epiſtle to Louis XIV. *I admire and am ſilent. Vale.*

FREDERIC.

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LETTER CCCCXLIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, March 11, 1776.

MUST the indefatigable Achilles ever be ſeized by the foot? Shall the ingenious and ſage Horace continually ſuffer in that hand which has written ſo many beauties? Your frequent fits of the gout alarm the poor old man, who formerly told you it was his wiſh to die at your feet, and who tells you ſo ſtill. The weather at preſent is very unhealthy: our ſpring does not reſemble that of which the Greeks have ſung ſo ſweetly. We poor inhabitants of the north have imagined we have the ſeaſon called ſpring, but in reality we have nothing but wind, cold, and tempeſt. All theſe your majeſty will defy, as ſoon as you are rid of your gout: but not ſo the man of eighty, who cannot move, and to whom nature has left only one hand, with which to have the honour to write to you, and one heart, with which to regret the time when he was continually with you.

Since it is your majeſty's commands that I ſhould ſend you the correſpondence of a Benedictine with M. Paw, I lay it at your feet. I have

have omitted all the pieces foreign to the ſubject, which ſwelled this uſeleſs volume, one only excepted; this is a ſmall work of Maximus of Madaura, a famous pagan, the friend of St. Auguſtin, a renowned Chriſtian. To me it ſeems that this Maximus thought much the ſame as the hero of the preſent day; and that his underſtanding was more conſiſtent, and more ſolid, than that of the good biſhop of Hippo-Regius.

The packet is rather large to be ſent by the poſt, but ſuch are your majeſty's commands.

I wiſh you the health and long life of marſhal Keith *, as well as that ſweet repoſe which you have ſo well deſerved, by your activity of every kind. I deſpair at being obliged to die far from you; and venture to requeſt, with equal reſpect and tenderneſs, a continuation of your kindneſs.

* M. de Voltaire forgot himſelf: he certainly meant the brother of marſhal Keith; that is, the lord marſhal, as he was generally called. T.

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LETTER CCCCL.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 19, 1776.

IT is true, as you have ſaid, that the Chriſtians have been the groſs plagiariſts of fables that had been invented before their exiſtence. I forgive them their virgin, in conſideration of ſome beautiful pictures which the painters have made of her; but you muſt nevertheleſs allow that neither antiquity nor any nation whatever have imagined a more atrocious and blaſphemous abſurdity, than that of eating their God! This is a dogma the moſt revolting, the moſt injurious, to the Supreme Being; beſide being the very height of folly and phrenzy. True it is, the Pagans made their deities act ridiculouſly enough, and attributed to them every kind of human weakneſs, and paſſion: I own too that the Indians have thirty times incarnated their Sommona-codom: but none of theſe people ever eat the object of their adoration. The Egyptians only were allowed to devour their God, Apis; and thus have the Chriſtians treated the Autocrator of the univerſe.

To you and to the abbé Paw I give up the Chineſe,

Chineſe, the Indians, and Tartars. The nations of Europe afford me ſo much employment, that I ſeldom, in my meditations, leave this moſt intereſting part of our globe. But this does not prevent me from receiving pleaſure in reading the diſſertations which you have had the goodneſs to ſend. How can it be otherwiſe, while reading that which you write?

The abbé Paw pretends he is informed that the emperor Kienlong is dead, that his ſon at preſent governs, and that the late emperor exerciſed the moſt enormous cruelties upon the Jeſuits. Perhaps he wiſhes to make me a party in the cauſe againſt Kienlong; eſpecially ſince he knows how earneſtly I protect the ſcattered flock of St. Ignatius. But I remain neuter; and am more deſirous to know whether the colony of Penſylvania continues in the practice of its pacific virtues, or whether, quakers though they be, they determine to defend their freedom, and fight for houſe and home. Should this happen, as it apparently will, you muſt be obliged to allow there are caſes in which war becomes neceſſary, ſince the moſt humane of men make war.

Ammianus Marcellinus ought to be very near Ferney, according to the time when the book was ſent away. Our academicians all allow he is one of the moſt difficult authors of antiquity

to

to tranſlate, becauſe of his obſcurity. Should it be proved that we do not ſurpaſs the ancients in any thing elſe, we at leaſt write better in this age than men did at Rome, after the twelve Cæſars. Method, perſpicuity, and preciſion are predominant, in modern works; nor do our authors wander in epiſode, as was cuſtomary among the Greeks.

I do not love thoſe writers whom we yawn over and admire, were they even emperors of China; but I delight in thoſe whoſe productions we read and read again, moſt willingly, as we do the works of a certain patriarch of Ferney, of whoſe ſtamp antiquity furniſhes us with a few.

For theſe reaſons, therefore, you muſt not die; and, while the doating parliament of Paris ſhall burn your books, you muſt acquire new force, to confound the tutors of kings, and thoſe who empoiſon the mind with the venom of ſuperſtition. Theſe are the prayers of a poor gouty patient, who is happy in his convaleſcence, by which he ſtill enjoys the pleaſure of admiring you. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, March 30, 1776.

SHOULD your comrade the emperor Kienlong be dead, as you have informed me, I can only ſay I ſhall be very ſorry. Your majeſty well knows how much I love and revere kings who write poetry. I am acquainted with one who certainly writes better than Kienlong, and to whom I ſhall feel myſelf much attached, till I ſhall depart for the regions below, to pay my court to the Chineſe emperor.

We have at this time a young king, in France, who does not indeed write poetry, but he compoſes moſt excellent proſe. He has lately publiſhed ſeven beautiful works, all in favour of the people: the preambles to theſe edicts are maſter-pieces of eloquence, of reaſon, and of benevolence. The parliament of Paris has made remonſtrances to him, which are very plauſible. It is the battle of wit; but, had it been neceſſary to beſtow a prize on the beſt diſcourſe, good judges would certainly have made no difficulty of awarding it to the king.

This right of enregiſtering, and remonſtrating,

with which you are unacquainted in your kingdom, was firſt founded on an ancient precedent of a provoſt of Paris, in the age of St. Louis, and of your Conrad Hohenzollern II; which provoſt thought proper to keep a regiſter of all the royal ordinances, in which he was imitated by a clerk of the parliament, named John Montluc, in 1313. The kings thought this a very uſeful invention. Philip de Valois cauſed the parliament to enregiſter his regal rights. Charles V. took the ſame precaution, reſpecting the famous edict of the majority of kings at the age of fourteen. Treaties of peace alſo were often enregiſtered.

But they were unacquainted, in theſe times, with remonſtrances; the firſt of which, on the finances, were made under Francis I. relative to rails of maſſy ſilver, that ſurrounded the tomb of St. Martin. The ſaint having no occaſion whatever for ſilver rails, and Francis I. being in great want of ready money, he took the ſilver, which was granted to him by the canons of Tours, and the value of which was to be reimburſed from the domains of the crown. The parliament remonſtrated, to the king, on the irregularity of this bargain. This was the origin of all the remonſtrances which have ſince ſo much embarraſſed our monarchs, and which at

laſt

laſt were productive of the war of the Fronde, during the minority of Louis XIV.

We have no Fronde to fear, under Louis XVI.; and we have ſtill leſs to dread from the ridiculous but horrid acts of the Jeſuits, the Janſeniſts, and the Convulſioniſts. True it is, our debts are as immenſe as thoſe of the Engliſh; but we enjoy the ſweets of peace, of a good government, and of hope.

Your majeſty may well tell me the Engliſh are not ſo happy as we are; they are weary of their felicity. I do not think my dear quakers will fight; but they will give money, and others will fight for them. Your majeſty knows I am no great politician, but I very much ſuſpect the miniſtry of London is not equal to ours. We were ruined, the Engliſh are now ruining themſelves; each muſt have his turn.

You, ſire, build villages and towns, you encourage all the arts, and you no longer have any enemy, except the gout. I hope Mrs. Gout will make her peace with your majeſty, in imitation of ſo many other powers.

As to the Jeſuits, whom you ſo dearly love, the protection you afford them is very noble, in one of the excommunicated, among whom you have the honour to be ranked. In right of this quality, I flatter myſelf I likewiſe may claim ſimilar protection.

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I do not think, with M. Paw, that the emperor Kienlong has treated the Jeſuits who were in his empire with cruelty. Father Amelot tranſlated his poem. We always love our tranſlators, and I maintain that a monarch who writes poetry cannot be cruel. May I venture to aſk a favour of your majeſty? Will you deign to inform me whether I or the lord marſhal be the oldeſt? I am now in my eighty-third year, and I believe he is in his eighty-ſecond. My wiſh is that you may one day be in your hundred and twelfth.

LETTER CCCCLII.

From the King.

Potſdam, April 8, 1776.

I HAVE read the curious Letters which you have been kind enough to ſend me with pleaſure, and laughed very heartily at the anecdote of Alexander, related by Olearius.

The abbé Paw is exceedingly vain of the Letters being addreſſed to him. He does not believe he has any difference of opinion with you, in eſſentials; he imagines he thinks much as you do, concerning the Chineſe, ſome ſhades ex-

cepted. He ſuppoſes the empire of China has exiſted from the remoteſt antiquity; that the principles of ethics are there known, and that the laws are equitable. But he is alſo well perſuaded that, aided by theſe laws and this morality, men are the ſame at Pekin as they are at Paris, at London, and at Naples.

The things that moſt offend him, in this nation, are their barbarous cuſtom of expoſing their children, the inveterate knavery of the people, and the puniſhment of death, which is inflicted there more atrociouſly than even in Europe itſelf.

To this I anſwer him—Do you not perceive that the patriarch of Ferney follows the example of Tacitus? This Roman, that he might animate his countrymen to the practice of virtue, propoſed our ancient Germans to them as models of candour and frugality, though at that time they certainly did not deſerve to be imitated by any nation. Thus does M. de Voltaire continually repeat to the Gauls—"Learn to recom-
"penſe virtuous actions from the Chineſe;
"like them encourage agriculture, and you will
"behold your lands of Bourdeaux, and your
"wretched ſoil of Champagne, become fruitful
"by your labours, and produce abundant har-
"veſts. Make your encyclopediſts mandarins,
"and

" and you will be well governed. If, through " the vaſt empire of China, the laws be uniform " and ever the ſame, are you not aſhamed, oh " Gauls, that in your ſmall kingdom your laws " change in every pariſh, and that your people " never know by what cuſtoms they are to be " judged?"

The abbé anſwers me that you do very well in this: but he pretends that China is neither ſo happy nor ſo ſage as you maintain; and that it is devoured by abuſes more intolerable than thoſe of which we complain, here in the weſt.

It therefore ſeems to me that your diſpute is reduced to this—*May we be permitted officially to employ deceit, that good may be produced?*— This is a ſubject of conteſt; a queſtion on which opinions will never be unanimous.

For my part, poor Achilles, if Achilles I muſt be, I am neither invulnerable in the heel, in the knee, nor in the hand: the gout has travelled ſucceſſively over my whole body, and has given me a moſt excellent leſſon of patience. My head only has remained unattacked. I am at preſent divorced from the harpy, and hope, at leaſt for a time, that I am delivered. It cannot be but that our frail machine muſt be deſtroyed by time, which deſtroys all things. My foundations al-

ready are ſapped: I continue to defend the citadel; but I abandon the outworks to ſuperior force, which will ſoon put an end to me, by ſome well-prepared aſſault.

All this troubles me but little, provided I can but learn that the Proteus of Ferney has met with ſome ſucceſs againſt the *infamous*——; and that he continues to inſtruct us in literature, reaſon, finances, &c. &c. This to me is ſufficient. I do but further hope he will not forget the ex-jeſuit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S. I have received a letter from my niece, in Holland, in which ſhe informs me that, a Chineſe mandarin having arrived at the Hague, ſhe has had the curioſity to ſee and converſe with him, by the aid of an interpreter; and that he is ſaid to be very ignorant, and to have very little underſtanding. The abbé Paw triumphs in the intelligence: but I told him that one ſwallow does not make a ſummer; and that it muſt neceſſarily be, according to the eternal laws of nature, that among one hundred and ſixty millions of people, a population which you beſtow on China, there muſt at leaſt be ninety millions of fools and idiots; and that the evil ſtar of China

China would have it that preciſely one of this ſpecies ſhould undertake a voyage to Holland. If I have not ſufficiently refuted him, I leave the reſt to you.

LETTER CCCCLIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, April 20, 1776.

THE abbé Paw yields implicit faith to all the relations of the Jeſuits of China, concerning the death of the emperor Kienlong, which they have announced. As for me, as a rigid ſceptic, I neither believe him to be dead nor alive. Curioſity weakens with age; we confine ourſelves within a narrower ſphere. Walpole ſaid, "I give up Europe to my brother, and "reſerve only England to myſelf."—I am ſatiſfied with what has been, with what is, and with what may be, in our Europe.

I am much more incited to enquire after Louis XVI. than the emperor Kienlong. I have read a petition, or rather a letter of thanks, from the country of Gex, addreſſed to the Moſt Chriſtian King; and from the bottom of my heart have bleſſed the good which the ſovereign has

done, as well as thoſe who gave him ſuch excellent advice. The parliament ought rather to applaud theſe edicts of the monarch than to make ridiculous remonſtrances. But the parliament is compoſed of men; and the frailneſs of the virtues of men is leſs concealed, in the deliberations of great bodies, than in the reſolutions of the few.

Did not our ſpecies turn all things to abuſe, there could not be a better inſtitution than that of a body of men, who ſhould have a right to make remonſtrances, to ſovereigns, reſpecting the acts of injuſtice which they might be on the eve of committing. In France, we perceive how little ſuch a body thinks on the welfare of the kingdom. M. Thurgot has even found, among the papers of his predeceſſors, the ſums which it coſt Louis XV. to corrupt the councellors of his parliament, that he might induce them to enregiſter, without oppoſition, I know not what edicts.

As you Frenchmen are poſſeſſed with the mania of imitating the Engliſh, your parliament, while ſuffering itſelf to be corrupted, has imitated the worſt practice to be found in England. Republicans pretend they have a right to ſell their votes; but for judges, for magiſtrates, for thoſe who call themſelves the tutors of kings—

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As to us, Obotrites, when compared to Europe, we are but as anant-hill in the park of Verſailles. We build up our ſmall habitations; we provide ſtore for the winter; we labour, and we vegetate in ſilence. My neighbour the ant (the good lord marſhal, of whom you have made enquiries) is at preſent upward of eighty-ſix years of age. He reads for his amuſement the work of *P. Sanchery, de matrimonio*; and complains that the book awakens ideas in his mind which he is unable to gratify. As he is four years older than the protector of the capuchins of Ferney, I flatter myſelf that the latter may yet afford us ſome of his progeny, provided he ſhould but have the ſmalleſt inclination ſo to do.

The ex-jeſuit of Sans-Souci is continually employing himſelf in recovering his ſtrength, which returns but ſlowly. He has received remarks on the Bible, a work on Morality, and another on Laws. He ſuſpects from whom the preſent comes; but, till he ſhall have read the books, he cannot affirm whether he may or may not have rightly divined: due thanks of courſe will follow.

I implore all my ſaints, Ignatius, Xavier, Lainez, &c. &c. that they will be pleaſed to protect the protector of the capuchins, at Ferney;

ney; that their holy prayers may prolong his days, in order that he may perfect the noble work which he has undertaken, in the country of Gex; that he may ſtill long continue to enlighten France, and the whole world; and that he may not forget the ex-jeſuit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, May 21, 1776.

YOU will be aſtoniſhed when you caſt your eyes over the ſmall pamphlet which I ſend your majeſty. Could you imagine it to be written by the landgrave of Heſſe? His genius has developed itſelf, ſince he has become your nephew, and has read your works. I do not poſitively know that he publicly owns this ſmall book, but I certainly know it to be his. It is a picture which we eaſily diſcover to be by a painter of your ſchool. You have given birth to a new age; you have formed men and princes. In how many various ways will your name aſtoniſh poſterity!

We have great need that your philoſophic majeſty long ſhould continue to reign. We had among us Gauls two philoſophic miniſters, and here are they both at once excluded the adminiſtration! Who can ſay whether the ſcenes of La Barre and D'Etallonde will not again be acted in our unhappy country? Reaſon begins to acquire ſo many partiſans, that her enemies betake themſelves to their arms; and how dangerous theſe arms are we well know. Poor unfortunate Reaſon muſt neceſſarily therefore come, with her diſciples, and take refuge in your ſtates; like as the proteſtants came to ſeek an aſylum under the king your grandfather. Since I have been on earth, I never beheld reaſon free from perſecution. I ſhall no doubt leave her in the ſame condition. But I ſhall conſole myſelf in the hope that ſhe will find unſhaken ſupport in the hero who has ſaid—"Though I admire Alexander and Hercules, "I am more delighted with the virtues of "Ariſtides."

I throw myſelf at the feet of the Hercules and the Ariſtides of modern times.

LETTER CCCCLV.

From the King.

Potſdam, June 19, 1776.

I AM returned from paying a viſit to my demi-ſavages of Pruſſia; and, to increaſe my pleaſures, I found the letter which you have been kind enough to write to me.

I thank you for the *Catéchiſme des Souverains**, a production which I did not expect from the pen of the landgrave of Heſſe.

You do me too much honour, when you attribute his education to me. Had he been a diſciple of mine, he would never have become a catholic; neither would he have ſold his ſubjects to the Engliſh, like as we ſell black cattle for the ſlaughterhouſe. This latter trait but ill agrees with the character of a prince who preſumes to act the preceptor to kings. The ſordid paſſion of intereſt is the ſole cauſe of this unworthy proceeding. I pity the poor Heſſians, who are to terminate, ſo unfortunately and ſo ineffectually, their career in America.

We have been informed here of the diſmiſ-

* The Catechiſm of Kings.

ſion of ſome of the French miniſters. At this I am not aſtoniſhed. I figure Louis XVI. to myſelf as a young ſheep, ſurrounded by old wolves: he will be happy ſhould he eſcape their jaws. A man well acquainted with the whole routine of government would find work enough in France; watched and inveigled by fallacy and artifice, they will induce him to commit miſtakes. It is therefore very natural that a young inexperienced monarch ſhould be hurried away by the torrent of intrigue and cabal.

Yet will I never believe that the country of Voltaire will, in our times, become the aſylum or the laſt retreat of ſuperſtition. There is too much knowledge and too much underſtanding, in France, to ſuffer the barbarous bigotry of the clergy hereafter to commit thoſe atrocious acts, examples of which are ſo abundant in paſt times. Hercules vanquiſhed the Nemean Lion; and an athletic hero, named Voltaire, has cruſhed the hydra Fanaticiſm under his feet.

Reaſon daily developes her powers throughout Europe; the moſt ſtupid countries feel her aſſaults. I will except none but Poland: other ſtates bluſh at the blunders into which error has led their former inhabitants. Auſtria, Weſtphalia, nay Bavaria, all endeavour to acquire ſome rays of light. It is you and your works

that

that have produced this revolution in the minds of men; the battering ram of true ridicule has ruined the ramparts of ſuperſtition, which the excellent logic of Bayle could not bring to the ground.

Enjoy your triumph. May your reaſon long reign over the minds which you have enlightened; and may the patriarch of Ferney, the pillar of truth, never forget the old hermit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLVI.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 7, 1776.

THEY do me great honour by ſpeaking of me in Swiſſerland; and the news writers muſt be in prodigious lack of matter, when they make uſe of my name to ſwell out their columns.

I have indeed been ill during the laſt winter, but ſince my recovery I am in much the ſame ſtate of health as before. There may indeed be people in the world who think I live too long, and who calumniate my health, in the hope that, by continually urging the queſtion, I may at length be induced to make the dangerous leap

with

with all the haſte they could deſire. Louis XIV. and Louis XV. tired out the patience of the French. I have been ſix-and-thirty years in office: perhaps, according to the example theſe kings have ſet me, I abuſe the privilege of living, and am not complaiſant enough to decamp when men are weary of me.

With reſpect to my method of not ſparing myſelf, it is uniformly the ſame; the more careful we are, and the more delicate and feeble does the body become. My ſtation requires labour and action, and my body and mind muſt comply, and perform their duty. It is not neceſſary that I ſhould live, but very neceſſary that I ſhould act. I have continually profited by this rule, which I do not however preſcribe to any one; I am ſatisfied with following it myſelf.

In fine, I have been able to be preſent during all the feſtivals that have been given in honour of the grand duke (of Ruſſia). This young prince is the worthy ſon of an auguſt mother; and we have done every thing in our power to alleviate the fatigues and the languor of a long journey, and to render his abode here agreeable. Appearances ſpoke him ſatisfied, and we have heard of his return to Peterſburg in perfect health. His promiſed bride will be there on the 12th of this month; and, after ſome apiſh tricks performed

performed in honour of ſaint Nicholas *, the nuptials will be celebrated.

Grim paſſed through Berlin during the ſtay of the grand duke. He left you ill, at hearing which I was diſturbed. At length, after a certain ſpace of time, I concluded you had entirely recovered.

We have as lying newſpapers at Berlin as you have at Ferney. Our gazettes affirm the old patriarc his become a monk of Cluni. Be it as it will, you will not long hold your abbey; but on this I trouble myſelf little, though much in behalf of the pretended monk.

I am now returned from Sileſia, where I have acted the œconomiſt, as you do at Ferney. I have built villages, drained marſhes, eſtabliſhed manufactures, and repaired ſome towns that had been burnt. One M. de Fériére, engineer of the cabinet, preſented himſelf to us at Breſlau, and pretended to be acquainted with you. He no doubt knew that this to me was equal to a letter of recommendation. He has been employed in Alſatia, has ſerved in Corſica, and is now in the ſuit of M. de Breteuil, at Vienna. You may have ſeen, and perhaps have forgotten

* Foreign princeſſes, who intermarry with the royal heirs of Ruſſia, are obliged to become members of the Greek church. T.

him;

him; for, among the innumerable crowd that come to pay their court to you, flying viſitors muſt neceſſarily eſcape your memory. Idiots formerly went on pilgrimage to Jeruſalem, or to Loretto; at preſent every one, who ſuppoſes himſelf in poſſeſſion of wit, repairs to Ferney, that returning home he may ſay—*I have ſeen him!*

Be your title what you pleaſe, marquis of Ferney, monk of Cluni, or intendant of the country of Gex, may you long enjoy your renown! But do not forget that, in the further part of Germany, lives an old man who formerly poſſeſſed you, and who will regret you ever. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLVII.

From the King.

October 22, 1776.

IT is now nearly two months ſince the ſmalleſt drop of the heavenly dew of Ferney has alighted on the ſhores of the Baltic. The ſelf-called muſes, and the inhabitants of our ſandy Parnaſſus, are viſibly in a decline, and would already

ready have become ſkeletons, had not a certain commentary on I know not what Bible happened to have fallen into their hands: to this work do they owe their exiſtence. Every body has laughed, becauſe that inſtead of Nazareth Egypt muſt be underſtood; and inſtead of Egypt Nazareth. The burſt of laughter has been echoed from Mansfeld as far as Memel, and has diſſipated atrabilarious humours, and infuſed joy throughout our diſtricts.

May the benediction of heaven alight on the jocular commentator of this profound work! I think him as capable of explaining political treaties as Hebrew viſions; and perhaps, had the French and Engliſh but employed him to ſettle their ancient diſputes concerning Canada, there would have been no quarrel; the laſt war would have been avoided, and this certainly would not have been a trifle.

I incloſe ſome verſes which one of our dreamers had fabricated, previous to the arrival of the divine commentary: thoſe which he will write at preſent will be more gay. He propoſes to demonſtrate that eighty years and twenty are the ſame; and to prove his aſſertion by the example of perſons who do not grow old, and who in the winter of age reſemble the ſpring time of youth.

Your

Your Gauls are preparing to make war, by ſea, on I know not whom: they have bought much wood from my yards, which I pray God to bleſs. See how the chain of cauſes connects the moſt diſtant objects! It was neceſſary that the Portugueſe ſhould act with impertinence, in Paraguay, that Don Carlos might fall in a paſſion; it was neceſſary that a family compact ſhould by conſequence oblige Louis XVI. to fall in a paſſion, and repair his navy; and that, in order to have wood and maſts, he ſhould ſend in ſearch of them to our yards. Here is the pure doctrine of Wolf: on this you commented, in the time of madame du Chatelet, without however adopting all the glittering deceptions of Leibnitz.

Well well, comment or comment not, according to your good pleaſure; but do not neglect to let me occaſionally hear news of the health of the old patriarch. I am not to be trifled with, when he is in queſtion. I flatter myſelf that the clock of Rabelais will ſtrike for us both at the ſame inſtant, and that we may travel in company, and talk metaphyſics in the lower regions; at leaſt I hope I ſhall not ſurvive him, and be told of a loſs which all Europe will feel.

I ſay this very ſeriouſly, and recommend you

to the holy keeping of Apollo, of the Graces, who never quit you, and of the Muſes, who ſit watchful at your ſide.

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, November 8, 1776.

YOU have ſent me a very uncommon work, for all it contains is true. The taſk of thanking your philoſophic majeſty in rhyme muſt be left to the philoſopher D'Alembert. Not, alas! that it is my age of eighty-two which prevents me from telling you, in verſe, that reaſon is on your ſide; it is becauſe I have for theſe two months experienced the truth of what you have aſſerted, in your beautiful Epiſtle—

Et la pourpre et la bure éprouvent le malheur;
L'un pleure ſur le trône, et l'autre en ſa chaumière.*

I do not weep in my cottage, for I want moiſture, though I do not want cauſe. The inhabitants of Nazareth do not laugh like the inhabi-

* In ſilk or woollen, alike misfortune comes; one weeps on the throne, another in the cottage.

tants

tants of the Baltic ſhores: they ſilently and cruelly perſecute; they unearth a poor man from his hole, and puniſh him for having formerly laughed at their expence. All the misfortunes which can alight on a wretched mortal have at once fallen on me: law-ſuits, loſs of property, pain of body, and what are called pangs of the ſoul. I am abſolutely *the other* in the cottage. What then, ſire? You are not *the one* who weeps on the throne. You endured momentary adverſity many years ago; but with what courage, with what grandeur of mind, did you ſwallow the bitter draught! How did your afflictions add to your fame; and how greatly have you, at all times, been ſelf-ſuperior to the reſt of mankind!

I dare not raiſe my eyes toward you, from the den of my decrepitude, and the depth of my miſery. I no longer know whither I ſhall repair to lay my bones. The reigning duke of Wirtemberg, uncle to the princeſs whom you ſo well have married, owes me ſome money, which might have ſerved to procure me a decent burial; but he does not pay me, which will very much diſtreſs me, when I ſhall be dead. If I dared, I would venture to aſk your protection in my favour; but I am afraid I ſhould be better pleaſed to have your majeſty's bond.

Seriouſly ſpeaking, I know not where I ſhall go and die. I am another Job, crouching on my Swiſs dunghill; and the difference between Job and me is, Job at length was cured, and became happy. The ſame thing happened to the good man Tobit, who ſtrayed, like me, into a Swiſs canton of the country of the Medes: and the beſt of the joke is that we are told, in the holy ſcriptures, his grandchildren buried him with mirth *; apparently becauſe he died rich.

Pardon me, ſire, if, having become almoſt as blind as Tobit, and as wretched as Job, my mind be not ſufficiently at its eaſe to venture to write in my uſual but uſeleſs ſtyle.

A young baron or Saxon count, whoſe name I believe is Geſdorf, has viſited my cottage. He is an amiable man, full of wit and good breeding, polite and circumſpect. It has been ſaid your majeſty has taken the trouble to educate him yourſelf, by way of amuſement. The thing is apparent; Achilles now educates Phœnix, whereas formerly Phœnix was the preceptor of Achilles.

I throw myſelf at your majeſty's feet *de profundis*.

* Our tranſlation reads "buried him honourably." T.

LET-

LETTER CCCCLIX.

From the King.

November 25, 1776.

YOUR letter has afflicted me, nor can I divine what are the cauſes of your grief. The public papers are ſilent, the letters that come from Geneva and Swiſſerland make no mention of you; ſo that, on the whole, I imagine the *infamous* ——, more infamous than ever, enragedly perſecutes your latter end. But Geneva, Lauſanne, and Neufchatel are all in your neighbourhood, and are ſo many harbours to ſhelter you from the ſtorm. I cannot gueſs what your loſt ſuit means. The greateſt part of your money is placed out at Cadix, and the juriſdiction of the biſhop of Annecy certainly does not extend thither.

Have you been troubled concerning the changes which you have introduced into the country of Gex? Have the underſtrappers of Plutus leagued themſelves with the quacks of the maſs, to vex and diſturb you? Of this I am uninformed, but ſuch is what the conjectural art has allowed me to ſuppoſe.

In the mean time I have written to Wirtem-

berg, that you might be aſſiſted by the payment of a debt which I know is your due. I think it right however to inform you that I am not exceedingly well with his ſerene highneſs. We ſhall nevertheleſs do what we can.

It is ſingular that it has been my fate to become the conſoler of philoſophers. I have ſent all the lenitives of my ſhop to eaſe the affliction of D'Alembert. I would willingly do the ſame for you, were I but well informed of your diſeaſe; but I have been taught by Hippocrates that we muſt not pretend to cure a patient, before we have firſt well examined and ſtudied his malady. My pharmacy is at your ſervice, but it were better you had no need of any ſuch aid. In the interim, I pray moſt ſincerely for your content, and length of life. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S. Good God! How cruel it is to perſecute a man in his decline of life who renders his country illuſtrious, and who is the greateſt ornament of our age! What barbarians!

LETTER CCCCLX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Ferney, December 9, 1776.

IT is not aſtoniſhing that a man who has ſpent his life in ſcribbling againſt thoſe who deceive, plunder, and perſecute the inhabitants of the earth, ſhould himſelf be perſecuted by theſe plunderers at the cloſe of his life. That the Marcus Aurelius of our age ſhould take pity on this old Epictetus is ſtill leſs aſtoniſhing. With a daſh of your pen your majeſty deigns to comfort me, for the abuſe vented by the ſuperſtitious and implacable herd.

I take the liberty to lay at your feet the reaſons which ſo long have deprived me of the honour of writing to you, and among which the firſt was the neceſſity to which I was reduced, of becoming a petty *Libanius*, who had to anſwer the Gregories of Nanzianzen, and the Cyrils.

The ant-hill which I had raiſed in my retreat, and which has been deſtroyed by the rats of French finance, was the ſecond motive of my grief and my ſilence; and the forgetfulneſs of

your former pupil, the duke of Wirtemberg, was the third.

In the chaos of little affairs which derange little underſtandings, I dared not at my age write to your majeſty. I trembled to doat, in preſence of the maſter of Europe.

The ſame hand which inſtructs kings, and conſoles D'Alembert, condeſcends alſo to ſtretch itſelf forth to me. Your majeſty was too kind, when you were good enough to write a word in my favour to Wirtemberg. Unfortunately, my debt lies in the county of Montbeliard, and the principality of Montbeliard appeals to the parliament of Beſançon; the ſuit is never ending, whereas there will ſoon be an end of me.

The duke of Wirtemberg has at preſent given me his word to ſatisfy me, in the courſe of next year. His regency owes me a hundred thouſand livres (upward of four thouſand pounds ſterling) which is enough to ruin a man who had before ruined himſelf, by building a ſmall town. But I muſt have patience, and wait the payment of the duke of Wirtemberg; or wait for death, which is the general paymaſter.

I lay my trifling ſorrows at your majeſty's feet, ſince ſuch are your commands. Poſterity will laugh, ſhould poſterity ever know that an inſignificant perſon laid a ſtate of his affairs before

Frederic

Frederic the Great, and that Frederic the Great condeſcended to pay attention.

A tolerably curious book has lately been printed at Paris, on the literature, religion, and cuſtoms of China. The greateſt part of this book is compoſed by a Chineſe, whom the Jeſuits ſtole from his parents in his infancy, and who has ſince been educated by them at their college, in Paris. He ſpeaks French perfectly; but unfortunately he is himſelf a Jeſuit, and one of the moſt inſolent madmen of them all. He has imbibed the rage of "forcing them to "come in:" the raſcal is capable of overturning the empire *. I flatter myſelf that, ſhould your ſcholar in poetry, and your very dull ſcholar, Kienlong, be at length informed of the fanaticiſm which is hatching in his capital city, he will ſoon drive all the converters weſtward.

Deign, ſire, to preſerve your kindneſs toward my old ſoul, which will very ſoon forſake her old body.

* From this paſſage it ſeems apparent that the Jeſuit Chineſe had again returned to his native country. T.

LET-

LETTER CCCCLXI.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 26, 1776.

WHEN writing to Voltaire, we ought to write in the language of Voltaire; that is, in the language of the Gods. As I cannot well expreſs myſelf in this tongue, I muſt ſtutter forth my thoughts.

What! Muſt thou never live in peace?
Shall perſecution never ceaſe?
And muſt thy ſplendour give offence
To want of wit, and want of ſenſe?

On worth ſupreme 'tis vile to trample;
Yet is it not without example:
The Gods themſelves, who bleſſings ſhow'r
On ev'ry mortal ev'ry hour,
By wretched Guilt blaſphem'd, decried,
Their goodneſs daily hear denied.
Like them immortal, thou, Voltaire,
The general calumny muſt ſhare.

I do not ſtop at writing bad verſes; I have written to Wirtemberg, to ſolicit the payment of your arrears. I imagine you may eſcape the acrid zeal of the bigots by taking refuge in Swiſſerland, where you will be ſheltered from all perſecution,

perſecution, and from the afflictions of which you complain. With reſpect to your new ſettlement at Ferney, I attribute the diſturbance you meet with there to the ſpirit of vengeance of the collectors of your financiers, who hate you becauſe of the good you wiſh to do to the country of Gex, by guarding it for a time againſt the voracity of theſe people.

I own that I am embarraſſed to find any remedy to this evil, becauſe of the difficulty of inſpiring fellows who neither poſſeſs reaſon nor humanity with rational feelings. Remain perſuaded however that, did the eſtate of Ferney appertain to Apollo himſelf, the accurſed collecting race would not have treated him with more lenity. How ſhameful is it, for France, to perſecute a man who ſtands alone; a man who, happily for her, took birth in her boſom; a man for whom ten kingdoms would contend that he might be numbered among their natives, as formerly the cities of Greece contended that Homer was the native of them all! How cowardly, how diſguſting to the mind, is it to ſee his latter days thus embittered!

Theſe unworthy proceedings make me angry, and I am vexed that I am unable to afford you more efficacious aid than that ſovereign contempt in which I hold your perſecutors. Yet

Maurepas

Maurepas is no bigot; the count de Vergennes is ſatisfied in hearing maſs when, for form's ſake, he cannot ſtay away; Necker is a heretic. Where then is the hand that deals the blow? The archbiſhop of Paris is known to be what he is; and I cannot tell whether the Ex-Jeſuit, his Mentor, be or be not with him ſtill. No one knows who is the confeſſor of the king. Can the Devil incarnate, in the perſon of the biſhop of Puy, have raiſed the ſtorm? In fine, the more I think the leſs can I diſcover who can be the author of this injury.

I have not read the work you mention on China; and I place the leſs faith, in what comes to us from ſuch diſtant countries, becauſe I know how much we are often perplexed in learning the truth of what actually happens in Europe.

Be certain however that the moſt grievous puniſhment you can inflict, on your enemies, will be to live in their deſpite. Let me entreat you thus to torment them; and to reſt perſuaded that no man is more intereſted, in the welfare of the old patriarch of Ferney, than is the hermit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LET-

LETTER CCCCLXII.

From the King.

Potſdam, February 10, 1777.

THAT you have yourſelf terminated your affair with the duke of Wirtemberg is better than if you had had recourſe to my aſſiſtance. I congratulate you that you have this vexation the leſs on your mind; and I ſhall rejoice to hear that all your ſubjects of chagrin are overcome.

Your age ought to render your perſon ſacred and inviolable. I grow indignant, I become angry with the wretches who embitter your old age. I often ſay to myſelf—Why did it happen that Voltaire, who is the honour of France and of his age, ſhould be born in a country ungrateful enough to ſuffer him to be perſecuted? How diſcouraging is this to future generations! Where hereafter will the Frenchman be found, who ſhall devote his talents to the glory of a nation which is ignorant of the great men ſhe herſelf produces, and which inſtead of rewarding them puniſhes.

Perſecuted merit moves me; and I fly to its aid, were it even to the end of the earth.

If

If I muſt renounce the hope of ever more ſeeing the immortal Voltaire, at leaſt I ſhall have the pleaſure to converſe this ſummer with the ſage Anaxagoras. We will philoſophiſe together; your name ſhall continually be the ſubject of our diſcourſe; and we will weep over the wretched fate of man, who, from weakneſs or from ſtupidity, continually reverts to fanaticiſm.

Two Dominicans, who keep the king of Spain at their feet, diſpoſe of the whole kingdom: their falſe and ſanguinary zeal has re-eſtabliſhed, in all its ſplendour, the Inquiſition, which M. d'Aranda had ſo wiſely aboliſhed. As the world goes, ſuperſtition is victorious over philoſophy; for the herd of mankind have neither improved, juſt, nor mathematical, underſtandings. The people know that thoſe whom they have offended may be appeaſed by preſents; they think it is the ſame with reſpect to the Deity, that one infallible means of pleaſing him is to burn a heretic at the ſtake, and that the ſacrifice will to him be a ſavoury ſmell. To this add ceremonies, the ſermons of monks, the applauſes of friends, and the ſtupid devotion of the multitude; and you will not think it ſurpriſing that the blinded Spaniards ſhould ſtill be attached to a religion worthy of the anthropophagi.

Philoſophers might proſper among the Greeks

and

and Romans, becauſe no dogmatical opinions were maintained in the pagan religion; whereas the dogmas of our *infamous* —— ſpoil all. Authors are obliged to write with a degree of circumſpection that is injurious to truth: the prieſthood revenge the leaſt ſcratch which orthodoxy endures. No one dares openly diſcover truth; and the tyrants of the mind inſiſt that the opinions of men ſhould all be caſt in one mould.

You will ever maintain the advantage of having ſurpaſſed all your predeceſſors, in the noble heroiſm with which you have combated error. Men do not reproach the famous Boerhaave becauſe he did not annihilate inflammatory fever, phthiſic, and epilepſy, and only exerted himſelf in the cure of ſome of his contemporaries. With as little juſtice could they reproach the learned phyſician of the ſoul, at Ferney, for not having rooted out ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm, and for having applied his remedies to thoſe only who were not incurable.

I, having ſubjected myſelf to his regimen, beſtow a thouſand bleſſings on him, and wiſh him long life and proſperity. In theſe ſentiments the hermit of Sans-Souci ſalutes the patriarch of the unbelievers. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLXIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, March 26, 1777.

OF the three reaſons which have prevented you from anſwering me, the firſt and the ſecond are the reſult of the laws of nature; but the third is the conſequence of the malignity of men, which would lead me to hate them, if happily for humanity ſome virtuous ſouls were not to be found, in favour of whom we pardon the ſpecies. Yet how cruel is that malignity which perſecutes an old man, and takes a pleaſure in embittering his latter end! We ſhudder at ſuch acts; and I feel ſo great a repugnance to the tonſured executioners who aſſault you, that, had I the power, I ſhould exterminate them from the face of the earth.

Poor Morival, who, though young, has endured their aſſaults, has been ſo afflicted at heart, and principally by the inhumanity of his relations, that he has lately had an apoplectic attack. We hope however that he will recover. He is a good and worthy man, and deſerves to be ſerved for his aſſiduity, and the deſire he has to act

properly. I am perſuaded you will feel compaſſion for him.

Thoſe who have ſpoken to you on the French government ſeem to me to have been guilty of ſome exaggeration. I have had occaſion to enquire into the real ſtate of the revenues and debts of the kingdom: the latter are enormous; reſources are exhauſted, and taxes are multiplied in an exceſſive manner. The only means of eaſing the burthen of theſe debts, in time, will be to leſſen expences, and to retrench whatever is ſuperfluous. This will never be effected; for, inſtead of ſaying, So much is my revenue, which will allow me to expend ſo much—it is ſaid, Such are my wants, let them be ſupplied.

Were but the tonſured knaves freely bled, ſome reſources might be procured. Theſe however would be inſufficient to pay off a part of the debts, and to afford that eaſe to the people of which they are in ſo much want. The ſource of this vexatious ſituation is to be found in precedings reigns, during which debts have been contracted, and payment never thought of.

Every branch of government is now influenced by the deranged ſtate of the finances. This has ſtopped the ſage projects of M. de Saint Germain, who did not half execute his plans. It likewiſe prevents the miniſtry from aſſuming

that aſcendancy, in the affairs of Europe, of which France was in poſſeſſion, from the time of Henry IV.

With reſpect to your parliament, I, as a man of reflection, condemn its recal, becauſe it was contrary to the principles of logic and of good ſenſe.

Thus you ſee how quickly we diſcover the miſtakes of others, and how blind we are to our own defects. I ſhould do much better, were I to regulate my own actions, and take care not to blunder myſelf, than I now do by examining the wheels on which great monarchies roll.

You mention a German author, who in like manner pretends to direct the politics of Europe; and I can aſſure you he is an empty dreamer, who deals out partitions after the example of thoſe that have been made in Poland. This great man is ignorant that ſuch partitions are uncommon, and are never twice repeated during the life of the ſame perſon. The little truth diſcoverable, in the aſſertions of this great politician, is in the poſſibility of new troubles ariſing in the Crimea, between Ruſſia and the Porte; and the unmeaſured ambition of the emperor, to aggrandize himſelf toward Adrianople. To this quality of ambition he adds youth; but my age of ſixty-five ought to place my intentions

beyond

beyond ſuſpicion. Is this a time for me to form projects?

I here ſend you, inſtead of the bad poetry which I might have ſent, a ſelection of the beſt pieces of Chaulieu, and madame Deſhoulieres, which I have cauſed to be printed for the uſe of myſelf and my friends.

To return to the divine patriarch of unbelievers, I think he will act very wiſely to deceive his enemies: their intention is to torment him; and the only oppoſition he ought to make ſhould be in neglect, and contempt. Should he be obliged to retire into Swiſſerland, he might from this free country regale them with a piece which ſhould unmaſk all their turpitude and raſcality.

May nature long preſerve *Divum Volterum*; and may I long enjoy the ſatisfaction of receiving his letters! *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S. When you read my letter, you will ſuppoſe me an old political lunatic. I know not how I happened to appoint myſelf prime miniſter of the moſt chriſtian king of the Gauls.

LETTER CCCCLXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

April, 1777.

OH ſtrange! Can the man who is Victory's theme,
In Eloquence, Laws, Arts, and Valour ſupreme,
Of Error ſworn foe, and of Truth the firm friend,
To edit Idyllions can he condeſcend?
What! Madame Deſhoulieres commit to the preſs!
'Twas little expected by me, I confeſs,
That Tully, or Cæſar, with wo-begone ſigh,
Like Strephon, beneath weeping willows ſhould die.

It was decreed that your mind ſhould imbibe every kind of knowledge: you better than any perſon feel there are, in the works of madame Deſhoulieres, though rather feeble, ſome natural and even philoſophic paſſages, which merit to be preſerved. As for Chaulieu, he has written four or five pieces worthy of Frederic the Great.

Since you protect philoſophers after their death, your majeſty will alſo protect them during their life. The rage of fanatic pedants, in long robes, has lately condemned to perpetual baniſhment a young man whoſe name is De Liſle, for having written a book intitled *La Philoſophie de la Nature**. He is ſaid to be a learned man

* The Philoſophy of Nature.

of

of much imagination, and whoſe virtue far exceeds his temerity. I believe M. d'Alembert is well informed of his merit and his misfortunes.

For my own part, ſhould the foes of ſages perſecute me at the age of eighty-three, I have my coffin ready made, in Swiſſerland, at a league's diſtance from France. I have a kind of reſemblance to Morival; about a month ſince I was attacked with a ſort of apoplexy, the effects of which torment me more than can all the artifices of the fanatics. If I am able, I will employ my laſt moments in rendering the juridical aſſaſſins of Morival D'Etallonde, the chevalier La Barre, general Lalli, the marchioneſs d'Ancre, and numerous others, execrable.

All which your majeſty has deigned to ſay, on our government and our finances, is very true. Let Newton ſpeak of mathematics, and let Frederic the Great converſe of governing mankind. I ſhould be as much aſtoniſhed, were France at preſent to attack the Engliſh by ſea, as I ſhould be were our potency, or our impotency, to dare to attack your majeſty by land, without firſt having for twenty years diſciplined our troops.

Deign, ſire, to preſerve me in your favour to my laſt moment.

LETTER CCCCLXV.

From the King.

Potſdam, June 17 *, 1777.

THE Gods we feel, with preſent want,
The gift of Genius rarely grant;
Grown careful of the precious ſtore,
Quinault, Chaulieu, they ſend no more.
Though phlegm-oppreſs'd, and wanting fire,
Yet I the lyric ſong admire.
Amid theſe chilling northern ſnows
The ſtruggling fancy feebly glows:
I ſtrive to ſing, but ſtrive in vain.
'Tis but to eaſe ſuch mental pain
That others works to print I'm prone,
Since I'm denied to print my own.

Were I Voltaire, or Apollo, I ſhould perhaps have reduced the volume to a ſmall number of pages. But would it have become me to have acted the cenſor, with ſo much ſeverity, unable as I am to ſurpaſs thoſe whom I ſhould thus have mutilated? The ſame thing would have happened to me as did to La Beaumelle and Freron: they cenſured the Henriade, and thought proper to ſubſtitute verſes of their own; which

* The Berlin edition reads June 1.

having

having done, there was nothing worthy of cenſure in the poem, except what they themſelves had added.

I revert to your griefs and troubles: let me deſire you carefully to recollect that the intention of thoſe who perſecute you is to ſhorten your days. Play them the trick of living their curſe, and of being in better health than ever.

We are as tranquil and peaceable here as the quakers. We hear talk of general Howe, whoſe name every cur that barks pronounces. We read in the gazettes all that is related of the high deeds of the inſurgents of America. Some vaunt of the ſtrength of the Engliſh fleet; others aſſert that France and Spain have more ſhips than theſe iſlanders.

Of politics the gazette writers enjoy a momentary repoſe; and the univerſal topic is now the viſit of the count von Falkenſtein* at Paris, where the young prince enjoys the applauſes of the public. His affability is praiſed; and men are ſurpriſed to find ſo much knowledge poſſeſſed by one of the firſt monarchs of Europe. I ſee with ſome ſatisfaction the judgment I had formed of this prince is ratified, by a nation ſo enlightened as that of France.

This ſelf-ſaid count will return home through

* The emperor. T.

Lyons and Swiſſerland. I expect he will paſs by Ferney, and that he will wiſh to ſee and hear the man of the age, the Virgil, the Cicero of our times. Should this happen, you will in all things be victorious over JESUS. Some kings only, or I know not what magi, came to viſit him, in his ſtable at Bethlehem. Ferney will receive homage from an emperor.

To render the parallel perfect, I ſhall ſubſtitute to the ſtar, which guided the magi, the light of reaſon, which is the conductor of our young ſovereign. Should the viſit take place, I flatter myſelf that your new acquaintance will not induce you to forget your old; and that, among the crowd of your admirers, you will remember there exiſts an anchorite at Sans-Souci, whom you ought not to confound with the multitude. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S. I have read the work of De Liſle, in which no doubt there are ſome good things, but it has but little method; and toward the end there are many of thoſe thoughts which the Italians call *concetti.*

LET-

LETTER CCCCLXVI.

From the King.

July 9, 1777.

THE emperor, trav'lling like a ſage,
To glean the wiſdom of our age,
Shall come, and homage ſhall be paid
To him who wrote the Henriade:
Your influence acts by general laws,
And each inferior planet draws!
To your effulgent glorious day
Thereſa's ſcruples muſt give way.
To Rome though Joſeph was entic'd,
Yet to the man, call'd Antichriſt
By Jurieu, fam'd for flaming zeal,
Joſeph would neither bow nor kneel.
Geneva greater honours far,
By you and fate, is doom'd to ſhare;
For here ſhall he the man adore
Whoſe equal earth ne'er ſaw before.

The Auſtrians however have hitherto profited but little by the leſſons on toleration which you have given Europe. In the circle of Preraw, in Moravia, forty villages have at once unanimouſly declared themſelves proteſtants. The court, to bring them within the pale of the church, have ordered preachers to march with powder and ball arguments; and ſome dozen of

theſe wretches have been ſhot, till ſuch time as others can be burnt. Theſe acts, which we communicate to you, unfortunately afford but little comfort to humanity.

I know not whether I deceive myſelf, but to me it appears there is a leaven of ferocity in the heart of man, which often begins to ferment when it is ſuppoſed to be extinguiſhed. Thoſe who have been humanized, by the arts and ſciences, reſemble bears, the conductors of which have taught them to dance on their hind legs. The ignorant reſemble bears that have not been taught to dance on any legs. The Auſtrians, I except the emperor, well deſerve to be claſſed with the latter.

It is much to be lamented that the French, who in other things are ſo amiable and ſo polite, cannot ſubdue that barbarous impetuoſity which ſo often induces them to perſecute the innocent. In reality, the more we examine the abſurd fables on which all religions are founded, the more do we pity thoſe who are paſſionately enamoured with ſuch follies.

I incloſe a Dream, which may perhaps afford you momentary amuſement. To ſend you works like this, the offspring of a Teutonic imagination, is to caſt a drop of water into the ſea.

I thank you for the fine political project which

which you have propoſed to me, and which might be executed, were I now twenty. There will no doubt be an end to popes and monks: their fall will not be the work of reaſon; but they will be deſtroyed, in proportion as the finances of great potentates ſhall be exhauſted. When every expedient to procure money ſhall have been reſorted to in France, they will then be obliged to ſeculariſe abbeys and convents; the example will be imitated, and the number of cucullati will be reduced to a trifle.

In Auſtria, the ſame want of money will give birth to the project of having recourſe to the eaſy conqueſt of the ſtates of the holy ſee, that ſupplies may be obtained for extraordinary expences, and a heavy penſion will be ſettled on the pope.

What will be the conſequence? France, Spain, Poland, and in a word all the catholic powers, will not acknowledge one who is in ſubordination to the imperial arm as the vicar of Jeſus. Each ſtate will then appoint its own patriarch: national councils will be aſſembled. By degrees, they will individually depart from the unity of the church; and in the end each kingdom will have its diſtinct religion, as well as its diſtinct language.

As I do not declare in what year this prophecy

phecy ſhall be accompliſhed, no one can affirm it to be falſe. It is very probable however that, in time, affairs will take this turn. I ſenſibly feel the marks you afford me of your recollection, and of thoſe old times which you recal to mind. Alas! What would you now behold, at Sans-Souci, were it poſſible I might hope to ſee you there once more!

A man whom time has render'd cold;
Grown ſilent, phlegmatic, and old;
Whoſe ſoporific ſayings keep
His hearers more than half aſleep.
Inſtead of mirth, and themes jocoſe,
Of metaphyſics many a doſe,
In abſtract form and phraſe, he'll mix;
Or jumble theſe with politics,
With which his dotage has been ſmitten,
More dull than novel newly written.
To cap'ring, vig'rous, jocund youth
Succeed the couch and crutch uncouth.
Of forty years, a fatal ſpace!
Ah! memory, why the wrongs retrace?

Thus gentle Zephyr, forc'd to yield
To ſtern Aquilo, quits the field.
Quickly do Nature's throbs and throes
Expreſs her ſenſe of coming woes!
Her trees are bare; her verdure's loſt;
Each night ſhe feels a killing froſt;
Her joyleſs birds perch ſhiv'ring round,
And not a flow'r can now be found!

Such

Such is of Providence the plan,
And ſuch the wintry age of man.
By Error oft miſled, in youth;
Grown old, become the friend of Truth;
Late taught to ſearch, in Wiſdom's laws,
Cauſe and effect, effect and cauſe;
A mind on mighty projects bent;
An age in anxious ſtudy ſpent;
Slow winter-fruits of painful thought,
By rude experience dearly bought—
Theſe and the man muſt all deſcend,
Muſt in abhorr'd oblivion end.

Such is the tranſition common to the whole ſpecies, except to the divine Voltaire. He reſembles goody Sarah, who turned the brain of the petty kings of Arabia at the age of a hundred and ſixty. The mind of Voltaire grows young, inſtead of old. Time with him has loſt his wings; but it is to be feared that Nature too has loſt the mould in which he was caſt. Fable tells us that Jupiter prolonged the night in which he ſlept with Alcmena, that he might have time enough to mould Hercules; and I am well perſuaded that, were the phenomena of the year 1694 * to be well examined, a ſimilar miracle would be diſcovered.

Long may you continue to enjoy the prodigal favours of nature! No one is more intereſted in

* The year in which Voltaire was born. T.

your

your well being than is the recluſe of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

P. S. The ſpells of the necromancer of Ferney were neceſſary, to extract poetry from my old and barren brain.

LETTER CCCCLXVII.

From the King.

Auguſt 13, 1777.

I RECEIVED two of your charming letters on the eve of my departure for Sileſia, ſo that I am in haſte to anſwer you. I had ſuppoſed that, the oracles having originally been delivered in verſe, Apollo inſpired all the poets: but he inſpires none but Voltaire and Virgil; and the poets of the Obotrites predict falſely, as I ſometimes happen to do. I ſay, if the emperor would not viſit you, ſo much the worſe for him. Harbours, ſhips, and arſenals, may every where be ſeen: but our age has only produced one Voltaire; and whoever might have heard him converſe, and did not, has cauſe of eternal regret. But I have heard, from Vienna,

and

and from good authority, that the empreſs queen forbade her ſon to viſit the old patriarch of toleration.

The Swiſs have done wiſely, by reforming their laws, if they were too ſevere. We have already done the ſame, and I have further meditated on that ſubject: as a guide to myſelf, I have even ſcribbled ſomething on government, which, under the ſeal of ſecrecy, I ſhall ſend you on my return. If the welfare of the public, and the progreſs of reaſon, be the ſubjects in queſtion, I ſhall contribute to promote them with great pleaſure. The bank will ſend you the neceſſary money to Neufchatel, for the prize propoſed by the good folks of Swiſſerland. Every man ought to take part in the general good of his ſpecies.

You know I never pledged myſelf for the duke of Wirtemberg; I know him for what he is; but, if you imagine my interceſſion can be of any uſe to you, I will willingly write to him. You however, like me, are not ignorant that, after the example of the great powers, he has ſo embroiled the ſyſtem of his finances that his heirs, perhaps to the third generation, will be buſied in paying his debts. I wait your anſwer on this head.

I am departing for Sileſia, where I ſhall be occupied

occupied by the laws, over which we muſt watch, and watch. I ſhall likewiſe have arrangements in finance to make, lands cleared to examine, affairs of commerce to conſider, troops to review, and wretchedneſs to relieve. I ſhall not have finiſhed my tour before the 4th or 5th of next month, about which time I flatter myſelf I ſhall receive your anſwer.

If you think my letter ſhort, attribute it to the journey I am about to make. The brain muſt be very dry and barren that ſhould want materials, when writing to Voltaire; eſpecially when the writer eſteems and values his works ſo much as does the philoſopher of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

MOST MIGHTY DREAMER, Auguſt, 1777.

NO one ever dreamed a finer dream. Had the night thoughts of Nebuchadonozor reſembled yours, they never would have eſcaped his memory; nor would he have ſent for the magi, and have threatened to hang them, if they

they could not divine what he had forgotten. The emperor Julian, great philoſopher, great wit, and great apoſtate as he was, had not the good fortune to reaſon ſo conſiſtently, when awake, as you do ſleeping. He has been reproached with having raiſed the price of oxen, and cows, by his frequent ſacrifices, at the very time when he laughed at the holy ſacrifice of the maſs, and at the other farces of Chriſtianity.

You, mighty dreamer, laugh at all the world; and with good reaſon. There is even ſome appearance that you will correct it of its follies, before ſome three or four thouſand years have paſſed away; and, in truth, you well deſerve to live till this happy revolution ſhall be effected. I do not deſpair but that you will exhibit this new wonder to the world. In fact, if any ſecret there be by which it may be worked, it is the excellent precept which you have given, at the end of your dream—Eat and drink, for to morrow we die.

Though your night productions have afforded me pleaſure ſo great, thoſe I have received from your daily labours have not been leſs. Your ſhort verſes are delicious; but you have not propheſied ſo truly, reſpecting me, as reſpecting the reſt of the world. I have not been viſited by the count von Falkenſtein; and you will

ſee why, in the letter which I had the honour to write to you previous to this, which I incloſe, and in which I aſk a very ſingular favour, but one that to me appears neceſſary, and that may be attended with very good conſequences.

I throw myſelf at your feet, &c.

LETTER CCCCLXIX.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 5, 1777.

YOU have certainly before this received the prize to be beſtowed, in Swiſſerland, on the man who ſhall beſt have eſtimated the degrees of puniſhment. But it appears to me that the marquis of Beccaria has left but little to glean, and that it will be neceſſary to be guided by the rules which he has ſo judiciouſly formed. Whenever the puniſhment ſhall be in proportion to the crime, order will be reſtored.

I am not aſtoniſhed at what is doing in Spain, where they are re-eſtabliſhing the inquiſition, making war upon good ſenſe, and in a word committing numerous follies. Inſtead of the philoſopher, Aranda, a confeſſor, who is either a ca-

a capuchin or a cordelier, governs the king and the kingdom: *ex ungue leonem.*

I am returned from Sileſia, where I have been very well ſatisfied. Agriculture is making a very ſenſible progreſs there, and manufactures proſper. We have exported linens to the amount of five millions; and cloths to the amount of one million two hundred thouſand crowns. A cobalt mine has been diſcovered, among the mountains, which will ſupply all Sileſia. We make vitriol equal to that which is imported; and a very induſtrious man there manufactures indigo not inferior to that which is brought from India. An excellent method is found for the hardening of ſteel, and one much more ſimple than that propoſed by Reaumur. Since the year 1756, which was the year before the war, our population has increaſed one hundred and eighty thouſand ſouls. In fine, all the ſcourges which had laid this poor country deſolate are vaniſhed, as if they never had been; and I own I feel a ſweet ſatisfaction in ſeeing a province recover from ſuch diſtreſs.

Theſe occupations have not prevented me from committing my ideas to paper; and, that I might ſpare the labour of having them tranſcribed, I have cauſed ſix copies of my reveries to be printed, one of which I ſhall ſend you.

I have only had time to make a ſketch; the ſubject ought to be treated more fully. But it is the duty of the learned to give finiſhing touches. The encyclopediſts will not perhaps be always of my opinion; but each man is entitled to his own. If however experience be the moſt certain guide, I will venture to ſay my aſſertions are entirely founded on what I have ſeen, and on the reflections I have made.

Continue to live, patriarch of thinking beings; and, like the ſtar of day, to enlighten the univerſe! *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLXX.

From the King.

Potſdam, September 24, 1777.

SHOULD I execute your commiſſion I ſhould have worked a greater miracle than that of *Jean Jaques* at Venice. Like Bacchus *, I ſhould make a fountain ſpout from a rock. But the rock on which I am to perform my operations is harder than adamant; and from this you wiſh me to draw the waters of Pactolus. I

* The Baſil edition adds, or Moſes. T.

fear

fear leſt I ſhould loſe reputation, by my ſelf-ſaid pupil; and that it would happen to me as to the prophets of Cevennes, who pretended, at London, to raiſe the dead, but who never could accompliſh the buſineſs.

I have however thumbed over my old Cicero and Demoſthenes, in order to compoſe a moſt pathetic letter to his ſerene highneſs; and, by a moſt beautiful peroration, have endeavoured to ſoften his iron entrails, by repreſenting to him that the great man to whom he is indebted has merited the gratitude of all Europe; and that therefore it is a double debt; of which it is his duty to acquit himſelf. I have talked to him of a reſpectable old age, which ought to be honoured and eaſed; and of the good name he would acquire, by having aided to render the cloſe of life of the patriarch of thinking beings peaceful: a man whoſe fame ſhall endure longer than the Black Foreſt and Wirtemberg ſhall exiſt. In ſhort, if fine words can produce any effect on empty purſes, perhaps I ſhall indeed empty them of their laſt crowns; but for this I will not be anſwerable; for *ex nihilo nihil fit.*

Grimm is arrived here from Peterſburg, and we have ſpoken much of your Autocratrix, of her laws, and of the grand meaſures ſhe is taking to civilize her nation. Grimm is made a

colonel, of which I inform you that you may not omit his title, or remain ignorant that the philoſopher is metamorphoſed into a ſoldier. I ſuppoſe we ſhall hear of his high deeds of arms in the Crimea, ſhould the delirium of the Turks impel them to make war on the empreſs.

But my incertitude concerning the miracle I have undertaken to work occupies me the moſt. I dread my pupil will play me ſome trick; and that, jealous of my fame, he will render my miracle abortive.

Live, however, and preſerve yourſelf for the conſolation of thinking beings, and the great ſatisfaction of the hermit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLXXI.

From the King.

October 11, 1777.

I AM well perſuaded that, had Marcus Aurelius thought proper to have written on government, his work would have been much ſuperior to my pamphlet. The experience he obtained, while governing the immenſe Roman empire, muſt have been greatly ſuperior to any ideas

ideas which can have been collected by a chief of the Obotrites, and the Vandals. Beſide that Marcus Aurelius was perſonally ſo ſuperior, in practical morality, to kings, and I will venture to ſay to philoſophers themſelves, that any kind of compariſon with him would be raſhneſs.

Let us therefore leave Marcus Aurelius, while we both admire him, though unable to attain his perfection, and let us deſcend to the level of our mediocrity, lowering ourſelves to the ſterility of our age, which was exhauſted by beſtowing one Voltaire on mankind, and had not force enough to ſupply him with rivals.

I find the Swiſs are ſeriouſly thinking of a reformation of their laws. I am acquainted with the Caroline code: I pored over theſe old legiſlative acts, when I thought it neceſſary to correct the laws of the inhabitants of the banks of the Baltic. Theſe laws were laws of blood; according to the epithet beſtowed on thoſe of Draco; and, in proportion as nations become civiliſed, their laws ought to become mild. This we have done, and have found the good effects. Agreeable to the ſentiments of the moſt ſage legiſlators, I have thought it were better to impede, and to prevent, than to puniſh, the commiſſion of crimes. I ſucceeded in my at-

tempt; and, that I may give you a clear idea, it is neceſſary I ſhould acquaint you with our ſtate of population.

Our provinces contain not more than five millions two hundred thouſand ſouls; which, ſuppoſing France to contain twenty millions of inhabitants, is nearly the proportion of one fourth. Since our laws have been moderated, the mean number of ſentences of death is no more than fourteen, or fifteen at the utmoſt. This I can the more poſitively affirm, becauſe no perſon can be impriſoned without my ſignature; nor any one executed till I ſhall firſt have ratified the ſentence.

Among the delinquents, the majority are women who have deſtroyed their children; there are few murders committed, and ſtill leſs highway robberies. But, of the wretches who have ſo cruelly treated their offspring, none but thoſe againſt whom the murder has been well proved are put to death. I have done every thing in my power to prevent them from thus ridding themſelves of the fruit of their womb. Maſters are obliged to ſend information, when their maids are with child. Formerly, ſuch poor girls were obliged to do public penance in the churches; from which I have relieved them. There are houſes appointed, in each province,

in

in which they may lie in, and where their children are educated.

Notwithſtanding all theſe conveniences, I have not yet been able to root the unnatural prejudice from their minds which induces them to deſtroy their children. I am, at this very time, occupied with the idea of aboliſhing the ſhame formerly attached to thoſe who married women who had been mothers before they were wives; nor can I tell whether I ſhall not ſucceed.

We have entirely aboliſhed the torture, which has not been employed theſe thirty years. Some exceptions however muſt perhaps be made, in republican governments, againſt crimes of high treaſon. As, for example, ſhould there be any citizens of Geneva ſo perverſe as to form a conſpiracy, with the king of Sardinia, to deliver up their country to his power, be it ſuppoſed that one of the conſpirators were diſcovered, and that it were neceſſary to know who were his accomplices, that the plot might be rooted up—I think, in this caſe, that the public good would require the torture ſhould be adminiſtered to the delinquent.

In civil affairs, we ought to adhere to the maxim which requires the guilty ſhould rather be ſaved than the innocent puniſhed. After all,

when

when there is uncertainty, concerning the innocence or guilt of a man, were it not better to impriſon than to execute him? Truth lies at the bottom of a well, whence to draw her time is neceſſary; and ſhe is often tardy in her appearance. But we loſe nothing by ſuſpending our judgment, till facts ſhall be entirely eſtabliſhed: on the contrary, we ſecure peace of conſcience, on which every man of worth ought to reflect.

Pardon my legiſlative babbling: you have yourſelf led me to the ſubject, on which I ſhould not otherwiſe have ventured to diſcourſe. Theſe are affairs in which I am daily occupied. I have formed principles to myſelf, according to which I act, and theſe I lay before you.

I have forgotten for a moment that I was writing to the author of the Henriade; I imagined I was addreſſing my letter to the late preſident De Lamoignon. But every ſpecies of knowledge is yours, therefore no ſubject is foreign to your mind. If you wiſh for more of the ſame, from the Cujas of the Obotrites, you have only to ſay ſo; I will ſend you whatever information you require.

The hermit of Sans-Souci, while offering up his prayers for the preſervation of the patriarch of toleration, hopes he ſhall not be forgotten by him. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLXXII.

From the King.

Potſdam, November 9, 1777.

M. BITAUBÉ ought to think himſelf exceedingly fortunate, in having ſeen the patriarch of Ferney. You are the loadſtone that attracts all thinking beings to itſelf; each wiſhes to ſee the man who ſtands alone, and who is the glory of his age. Count von Falkenſtein felt this attraction; but, during his courſe, the ſtar of Thereſa impreſſed a centrifugal motion upon him, which, from tangent to tangent, impelled him to Geneva. The tranſlator of Homer (M. Bitaubé) believes himſelf a gentleman of the chamber of Melpomene, or a ſcullion in the kitchen of Apollo, and with this title he boldly preſents himſelf at the court of the author of the Henriade; while the latter deſcends, from his eminence, to the level of thoſe who come to pay him their homage.

Bitaubé has rightly informed you; I have built a public library at Berlin. The works of Voltaire were before too baſely lodged. A chymical laboratory, which was on the ground floor, threatened our whole collection with the flames.

flames. Alexander the Great properly placed the works of Homer in the moſt precious caſket he found among the ſpoils of Darius. I, not being Alexander the Great, nor having deſpoiled any one, according to my poor abilities have formed the moſt beautiful caſe I could, in which to place the works of our own Homer.

If, for the completion of this library, you will kindly add all you have compoſed, on legiſlation, you will give me pleaſure; eſpecially as I do not fear the expence of carriage. I believe that, in my laſt letter, I gave you ſome general notions of our laws, and of the number of capital puniſhments that annually happen; but I ought here neceſſarily to add that a well-regulated police is as effectual, in preventing crimes, as the mildneſs of the laws. The police is what the moraliſts call the repreſſing principle. One reaſon why men do not rob and murder is that, if they did, they would certainly be immediately diſcovered and ſeized. Thus are the timidly wicked reſtrained; and the more bold repair to ſeek their fortune in the empire, where the proximity of the frontiers of ſo many ſmall ſtates afford them numerous places of refuge.

You perceive that, in the empire, reſtitution is not made, even of the money which has been borrowed of philoſophers. I here ſend you the copy

copy of the letter which I received from the duke of Wirtemberg. This prince, who has a propenſity to the ſublime, wiſhes in all things to imitate the great powers; and, as France, England, Holland, and Auſtria are overburthened with debts, it is his pleaſure to rank the duchy of Wirtemberg in the ſame claſs. Nay I will not warrant that, ſhould any of theſe powers become bankrupt, he from a point of honour would not do the ſame.

I do not however think that you have now any thing to fear for your capital; conſidering that the ſtates of Wirtemberg have pledged themſelves to pay the debts of his ſerene highneſs, and that you are free to addreſs yourſelf to the parliaments of Lorraine and Alſatia. I well foreſaw his ſerene highneſs would be averſe to reimburſement; and I further aſſure you that this ſelf-ſaid pupil of mine has never liſtened to nor followed my advice.

Let not ſuch trifles diſturb the ſerenity of your life: tranquil, in the palace of the ſages, you may from that high ſtation contemplate the defects and weakneſſes of mankind; the errors of ſome, and the follies of others. Happy in the poſſeſſion of yourſelf, you will be careful of your health, in behalf of all your admirers; among and at the head of whom I hope you place the hermit of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLXXIII.

From the King.

Potſdam, November 18, 1777.

I WAIT for your inſtructive work on the Abuſe of the Laws with impatience, perſuaded that in it I ſhall find both the uſeful and the agreeable. Europe appears at preſent to be in the habit of enquiring into all ſubjects, which can influence the good of mankind; and we muſt do you the juſtice to teſtify that you have contributed more than any of your cotemporaries, to make the flambeau of philoſophy burn bright.

With reſpect to your Gauls, on whom you comment, I believe that, taking them in the whole, they much reſemble the other inhabitants of this globe. Perhaps they have ſomething of the impetuous mingled with their vivacity, which even occaſionally degenerates into the ferocious. But man is of a ſpecies ſufficiently malignant, and is in need of reſtraining principles, or his rooted malevolence would deſtroy the limits of all worth, and even of all decorum.

Recollect that, though the French repair from the ſcaffold to the theatre, Cicero, Atticus, Varro,

ro, and Catullus, were ſpectators of the barbarous combats of the gladiators; and that they afterward went to hear the tragedies of Ennius, and the comedies of Terence. Men are the ſlaves of habit: curioſity attracts them to the execution of a culprit, and languor leads them to the opera, not knowing otherwiſe how to kill time.

There are idlers in all great cities, and few people have acquired knowledge enough to form their taſte. Some perſons, who are thought to poſſeſs abilities, ſit in judgment on new productions; and the ignorant, incapable of judging for themſelves, repeat what the others have ſaid. Nor do their deciſions extend only to theatrical pieces; they make themſelves generally conſpicuous, and diſpenſe that which men have called fame. Such is the ſolid baſis on which renown is founded. Oh vanity of vanities!

You wiſh to know what is become of the Jeſuits here. I was ignorant of the anecdote of the regiment raiſed of that order, and which probably had its part in the adventure of the goats *. But, as theſe animals are very ſcarce in Sileſia, I do not think our good fathers con-

* Alluding to an army raiſed, by the Pope and the Jeſuits, againſt Henry IV.

taminate

taminate themſelves by any intercourſe with that ſpecies. I have, in a manner, preſerved the order; heretic, and, what is more, infidel though I am. The following are my reaſons.

We do not, in our ſtates, meet with any learned catholics, except among the Jeſuits; we have no people capable of forming ſcholars; we have neither fathers of the oratory nor puriſts. The remainder of monks are ſtupidly ignorant; it was therefore neceſſary either to preſerve the Jeſuits, or to ſuffer all the ſchools to decay: the reſult of which was a neceſſity that the order ſhould ſubſiſt, that profeſſors might be furniſhed, in proportion as they ſhould be wanted; and the foundation might ſupply the money required, though unable to pay lay profeſſors. Beſide that the univerſity of the Jeſuits furniſhed the divines that were deſtined to act as pariſh prieſts. Had the order been ſuppreſſed, the univerſity would no longer have ſubſiſted, and we ſhould have been obliged to ſend the Sileſians to ſtudy divinity in Bohemia; which would have been acting contrary to the fundamental principles of government.

All theſe good reaſons induced me to become the Paladine of the order; for which I have combated ſo ſucceſsfully that I have maintained it, ſome modifications excepted, in the ſtate

that it is at preſent; that is, without a general, without a third vow, and embelliſhed by a new uniform which has been conferred on it by the pope. The misfortunes of the order produced an effect on a general who, in his youth, had himſelf been a Jeſuit. M. de Saint Germain had formed grand and excellent plans, very much to the advantage of you Gauls; but he was oppoſed by every body, becauſe the reformation, which he wiſhed to effect, would have obliged your fops to have obſerved a degree of exactneſs which to them was very offenſive. Money was wanting, to enable to ſuppreſs the king's guards, and this was refuſed: thus were forty thouſand men, whom France might have obtained without paying an additional guinea, loſt to the Gauls, in order that ten thouſand idlers, exceedingly well combed, dreſſed, and laced, might be ſupported. And would you wiſh me not to eſteem a man who thought ſo juſtly? Contempt can only alight on the bad citizens, by whom he was counteracted.

Let me beg you to recollect father Tournemine, under whoſe tuition you drank the honied milk of the Muſes, and be reconciled to an order which has produced, and which in the laſt age furniſhed France with men of the greateſt merit.

I very well know they have caballed, and interfered with government; but this was the fault of government itſelf. I do not accuſe father Le Tellier, but Louis XIV.

But I trouble myſelf leſs concerning all theſe things than concerning the patriarch of Ferney. It is neceſſary that he ſhould live, that he ſhould be happy, and that he ſhould not forget the abſent. Such are the wiſhes of the recluſe of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

FREDERIC.

LETTER CCCCLXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

November 25, 1777.

IN all things great, yourſelf in all,
For learning you erect a hall
Juſt oppoſite your arſenal.
Thus you yourſelf are apt to ſtand,
With oppoſites on either hand;
On this the god of verſe appears;
On that the god of grenadiers:
Each, envious, is diſpos'd to quarrel
Who moſt ſhall load your brows with laurel.
To ſhew decided pref'rence loath,
By turns have you careſs'd them both;
And hence full many a doubt ſhall ſtart,
To know which moſt poſſeſs'd your heart.

I hear,

I hear, ſire, that M. d'Alembert has propoſed one of the martyrs of philoſophy for one of your librarians. I ſpeak of De Liſle, of whom your majeſty has heard, and who was very near being condemned, like Morival, by a ſanhedrin of fooliſh barbarians. De Liſle has learning enough for a man of wit, is very laborious, and has as much true virtue as bigots affect to have of the falſe. I believe him to be very worthy of ſerving your majeſty, in every branch of literature. Your vocation is that of repairing our acts of folly and injuſtice.

I have ſent ſome copies of the *Prix de la Juſtice et de l'Humanité*, by the poſt waggons, toward which you ſo generouſly contributed: they will arrive when it ſhall pleaſe God.

I am this day eighty-four years of age, and have more averſion than ever for extreme unction and thoſe by whom it is adminiſtered. In the mean time, I throw myſelf at your feet, and invoke you as my conſolation, in this life and in the next.

The old Valetudinarian.

LETTER CCCCLXXV.

From the King.

Potſdam, December 17, 1777.

IT is agreeable to poſſeſs a collection of all the thoughts of men*. With reſpect to works of imagination, I am convinced we muſt be ſatisfied with Homer, Virgil, Taſſo, Voltaire, and Arioſto. Mind ſeems to wither in all countries, and no longer to produce either fruits or flowers. As to hiſtorical works, it were neceſſary, if we could, to baniſh the ſpirit of party, falſe anecdotes, and miſtakes, from the mind, that we might render them uſeful. From metaphyſicians we learn nothing, but the incomprehenſibility of numerous objects, which nature has placed beyond the reach of our underſtanding: and the theologic lumber, of hypochondriac and fanatic authors, by whom it has been heaped together, does not deſerve that we ſhould loſe our time, in reading the abſurd fables, which have paſſed through their imaginations. Of mathematicians, who eternally calculate uſeleſs curves, I ſhall ſay nothing; but

* Meaning a library. T.

ſhall

ſhall leave them with their points without extent, and their lines without breadth. I ſhall do as much for the phyſicians, who proclaim themſelves the arbiters of life and death, and who are only the witneſſes of our afflictions. What ſhall I ſay of chemiſts, who, inſtead of making gold by their operations, diſſipate it in ſmoke?

Thus nothing remains for our uſe, and conſolation, but the belles-lettres; and theſe ſhall be mine. The reſt may be of ſervice in a metropolis, where lovers of learning, ill ſupplied with the gifts of fortune, cannot verify the quotations which they meet with, in other books, not poſſeſſing the originals. To this purpoſe I dedicate my library, in which the works of Voltaire very properly occupy the moſt ſplendid place. The beautiful edition of Paris, in quarto, is there diſplayed, in all its pomp.

You propoſe a M. de Liſle, for one of my librarians; but I muſt inform you that we already have three, and that there is an axiom which ſays—Beings muſt not be multiplied without neceſſity. I believe we muſt not increaſe our preſent number. I confeſs I had the folly to read the work of this De Liſle, for which he was baniſhed France, and which is an unconnected rhapſody. His reaſoning wants logic; and his

ideas are ſo chimerical that they can only be pardoned in a man in a ſtate of intoxication, and not in one who pretends to be a man of thought. Should he write by the ſheet, at Amſterdam, or Leyden, he may gain a ſubſiſtence; without, by coming here, ſacrificing his liberty to the caprice of a deſpot. There were ex-jeſuits, at Paris, who, after the ſuppreſſion of the order, became hackney coachmen. I dare not venture to propoſe this trade to M. de Liſle, though he might happen to drive well; and certainly it were better to be the firſt of coachmen than the laſt of authors. I ſpeak with undiſguiſed frankneſs; and, if you are acquainted with the original in queſtion, you will perhaps allow that he would be no loſer, by ſuch a metamorphoſis.

As for my unworthy pupil, the duke of Wirtemberg, I am far from excuſing his wrong proceedings. You muſt not be diſcouraged; you will gain more from him by importunity, than by convincing him of your right; and I hope I ſhall yet have occaſion to erect a trophy—*To Voltaire, the conqueror of the Duke!*

I am juſt going to Berlin, that others may keep a merry Chriſtmas, though I myſelf do not. We have a count Montmorency-Laval here, a very amiable man, whom I before ſaw in Sileſia. I have a diſpute with him: he intends

tends to learn the German, but I tell him that it will not repay his trouble, for we have no good authors, and that he only wiſhes to learn the language that he may make war upon us. He can take a jeſt, and certainly is no enemy of the Pruſſians.

May nature ſtrengthen the fibres of the old patriarch! For his body only am I intereſted, knowing his mind to be immortal. *Vale.*

FREDERIC

LETTER CCCCLXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, AND GREAT MAN, Ferney, January 6, 1778.

HOW much information, how much conſolation, and how much fortitude do you afford me, at the cloſe of my life! Your majeſty, or rather your humanity, is highly in the right: our metaphyſical, theological, and fanatical, lumber forms no doubt the moſt contemptible part of our learning. Yet men will continue to write on ſuch abſurd chimeras, ſo long as there ſhall be univerſities, prejudiced minds, and money to be gained.

Among mathematicians, few, except Archi-

medes and Newton, have acquired true glory; and they acquired it by inventing things in themſelves highly difficult, highly uſeful, and entirely unknown. Fame is not for thoſe who only know how to divide A B, plus C, by X, minus Z; and who paſs their lives in tranſcribing what others have invented.

With reſpect to hiſtory, it is after all nothing better than a gazette. The moſt exact abounds in falſehood; and its chief merit is its ſtyle. This ſtyle is the product of literature; with literature therefore muſt we be ſatisfied. Thus thought the great Condé, in his retreat at Chantilly; and thus thinks the great Frederic, at Sans-Souci.

When I propoſed the ſieur de Liſle to your majeſty, to arrange your new library, it was unknown to me that you had ſeveral men of letters thus employed. I propoſed him as a laborious and accurate man, very capable of making extracts, and of preſerving order. I have experienced his abilities in this way, and could confidently have preſented him to you, as a ſubaltern who might thus have rendered you good ſervice.

I am under more obligations to you than you imagine: your pupil at length has ſuffered himſelf to be ſomewhat moved. Of the eighty thouſand

ſand livres which I lent him, he has paid me twenty thouſand; and perhaps will pay me the reſt, before my death. For this I have to thank your majeſty.

The count de Montmorency-Laval will ſoon learn German enough to give the word of command, and to bid men turn to the right, and to the left. But, while you ſpeak French, and he ſhall liſten, he will give the preference to the language of Montmorency. There can be no doubt but that his family muſt love the Pruſſians. The cardinal de Bernis was the only man who ever conceived the thought of uniting France with the houſe of Auſtria, againſt the houſe of Brandenburg; and for this he was ſeverely puniſhed. His politics were as unfortunate as the theological chimeras of thirty other cardinals have been ridiculous.

I know not whether the poſt waggons have brought your majeſty the little packet, containing two copies of the ſhort work againſt inflicting the torture, and againſt the Caroline of Charles V. We ſhall ſoon endeavour to be humane in Swiſſerland, following your example: but you afford examples, of every kind, to the whole earth.

I throw myſelf at your feet, here in my hole, with all the reſpect, gratitude, and admiration which

which you cannot prevent me from feeling; though, in the height of your grandeur and your glory, ſuch feelings muſt to you be a ſubject of great indifference.

LETTER CCCCLXXVII.

From the King.

January 25, 1778.

I HAVE received the pamphlet of the ſage, the philoſopher, the zealous citizen, who modeſtly teaches government what are the defects of the laws of his country, and who demonſtrates the neceſſity of reformation. The work deſerves univerſal applauſe. In what relates to natural equity, and right reaſon, men have but one opinion, that of truth, which you havemoſt clearly demonſtrated. Why do they not follow this opinion? Becauſe their fear of labour is ſuperior to their love of the public good; becauſe of the antiquity of abuſe; and perhaps becauſe they would not add another flower to the wreath which an old philoſopher has woven for himſelf, by the exertion of the numerous talents with which by nature he has been prodigally endowed. The work ſhall have a place in my library, as a monument

nument of the love you bear to mankind. Copernicus, an it pleaſe you, ſhall alſo have a little corner of his own, as a Pruſſian, and may not perhaps be miſplaced between Archimedes and Newton. With reſpect to your Newton, I muſt confeſs I do not underſtand his vacuum, and his attraction. I allow that he has demonſtrated the motion of the celeſtial bodies more accurately than any of his predeceſſors; but you muſt nevertheleſs grant me that it is a glaring abſurdity to maintain the exiſtence of nothing. Let us keep within the limits which the little knowledge of matter that we poſſeſs has preſcribed. Either I miſtake or the doctrine of a vacuum, and of ſpirits that exiſt without organs, is the extreme of human eccentricity. Should one as ignorant as myſelf think proper to affirm that, between the planets of Earth and Saturn, that which has no exiſtence exiſts, men would laugh in his face. Yet the ſieur Iſaac* has ſaid the ſame thing, and has hedged himſelf round with calculations, which few mathematicians have followed: they rather incline to take his word, and admit his anti-truths, than to wander with him, in the labyrinth of integral and infiniteſimal calculations. The Engliſh have

* Newton. T.

built

built ſhips according to the moſt advantageous form which Newton had preſcribed, and their admirals have aſſured me that theſe ſhips were much worſe ſailers than thoſe which are built according to the rules of experience. I wiſhed to have ſome water-works in my garden, and Euler calculated the power of the wheels, to throw water up into the baſon from which it was to deſcend, through pipes, that it might be played off at Sans-Souci. My machine was mathematically made, but it could not raiſe a drop of water within fifty paces of the baſon. Vanity of vanities! Vanity of geometry!

I believe that Sweden would better ſuit your half ſyſtematic De Liſle than our country. Should he hang himſelf there, he will ſoon be regarded as the firſt wit in Stockholm. He may teach the Laplanders of Uma, Torno, and Kimigroad* metaphyſics; and may poliſh the ſavage manners of the inhabitants of the polar regions. Deſcartes was long an inhabitant of this kingdom: why ſhould not De Liſle there take up his abode? Indeed I believe that northern froſts may calm the heat of Provençal blood, which is often expoſed to the attacks of inflammatory fevers. This phyſico-politic advice and

* Or—Umea, Tornea, and Kymmenegärd. T.

univerſal

univerſal religion may very readily amalgamate with the ſyſtem of the vortices.

This is the firſt time that my ſaid pupil* has behaved properly. It is excellent to pay our debts; and it is ſtill more excellent not to uſurp what is not our own. The death of the elector of Bavaria may give riſe to events which may occaſion the moſt violent convulſions, in the public tranquillity. Never was the treaty of Weſtphalia ſo often read, ſtudied, and commented upon, as at preſent. A fog more thick than thoſe of our hoar froſts hides the future from us, and the incertainty of what may happen redoubles the curioſity of the public. Theſe great conſiderations have not prevented me from trembling for the life of the patriarch of Ferney: the mercileſs gazette writers announced your death, and all related to the republic of letters, including my unworthy ſelf, were ſtruck with terror. But you have ſurpaſſed the hero of Chriſtianity: he roſe on the third day; you are not dead. Live, and purſue your ſplendid career, for my ſatisfaction and that of all thinking beings. Such are the wiſhes of the recluſe of Sans-Souci. *Vale.*

* The duke of Wirtemberg, as I imagine. T.

LET-

LETTER CCCCLXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIRE, Paris, April 1, 1778.

THE French gentleman who will deliver this letter to your majeſty, and who is ſaid to be worthy of appearing in your preſence, can inform you that the reaſon why I have not had the honour to write to you, for ſo great a length of time, is that I have been buſily employed in avoiding two things which purſued me in Paris —damnation * and death. Is it not remarkable that, at the age of eighty-four, I ſhould have eſcaped two ſuch mortal maladies? Thus it is to be devoted to you! I proclaimed myſelf yours, and was protected!

With ſurpriſe and ſweet ſatisfaction have I beheld the repreſentation of a new tragedy, which the public, who, thirty years ago, regarded Conſtantine and Theodoſius as the models of princes, and even of ſaints, have applauded with unheard-of tranſport, though there are paſſages which affirm that Conſtantine and Theo-

* M. de Voltaire prepared his laſt tragedy, Irene, for the ſtage at this time. T.

doſius

doſius were no better than ſuperſtitious tyrants. I have met with twenty ſimilar proofs of the progreſs which philoſophy has made, among all ranks. I do not deſpair, in a month, of having the panegyric of the emperor Julian recited; and, ſhould the Pariſians but recollect that he behaved to them with all the juſtice of Cato, and fought for them like Cæſar, they will aſſuredly own their gratitude to him muſt be eternal.

Thus, ſire, is it true that men at length begin to be enlightened; and that thoſe who are paid to keep them in darkneſs are not always able to put out their eyes. For this, thanks to your majeſty! Prejudice you have vanquiſhed, like your other enemies; and your enjoyment is of every kind. You are the conqueror of ſuperſtition, as well as the ſupport of the liberties of Germany.

Long may you live, to ſtrengthen the various empires you have founded! May Frederic the Great be Frederic the Immortal!

Deign to accept the profound reſpect and inviolable attachment of

VOLTAIRE.

LET-

LETTER CCCCLXXIX.

From the King.

Undated.

YOU think better of me than I do of myſelf. You ſuſpect me of being the author of an Abridgment of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, and of the Preface. Of this there is but little probability. A man inceſſantly occupied by war, or by public affairs, has no time to ſtudy eccleſiaſtical hiſtory. I have written more manifeſtos, during my life, than I have read bulls. I have fought againſt the holy, againſt men with ſanctified caps, whom the infallible father had ſtrengthened, in the zeal they had entertained for my deſtruction. But my pen, leſs raſh than my ſword, reſpects objects which long cuſtom has rendered venerable.

It is with aſtoniſhment I learn, from your letter, that you can think of any other retreat than Swiſſerland, and that your choice ſhould alight on the country of Cleves. This aſylum ſhall be open to you at all times. How can I refuſe a man who has done ſo much honour to letters, to his country, to humanity, and to his age? You may travel from Swiſſerland to Cleves without

without fatigue; if you embark at Baſil, you may perform the journey in a fortnight, and almoſt without leaving your bed.

I have read the little pamphlet you ſent me with pleaſure: the impreſſion it will make will be ſuperior to that of a heavy work. Few people reaſon, whereas each man is ſuſceptible of being moved by a ſhort narrative of matter of fact. All this was not neceſſary to induce me to aſſiſt thoſe unfortunate people, whom fanaticiſm baniſhes from their country, though that country is the moſt poliſhed of any in Europe. They will meet with aid, and even a ſettlement if they pleaſe, which will protect them from the atrocious acts of perſecution, and the long formalities of juſtice, which they would never obtain.

This I am able, and this I offer, to execute; as well in favour of the author of the Henriade, as of his niece, his Jeſuit Adam, and his heretic Servet. I pray heaven to take them all into its holy keeping!

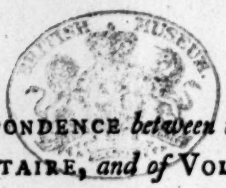
LETTER CCCCLXXX.

From the King.

Undated.

MY ſufferings have prevented me from anſwering your charming letter. The ſounds of your lyre have been heard in the realms of Tartarus, where I was confined; they have ſoftened the tyrants who oppreſſed me, and have reſtored me to life, as Eurydice formerly was reſtored by Orpheus. The firſt uſe I make of my convaleſcence is to thank the Orpheus, or the Apollo, by whom it has been procured; and, in tribute, to ſend him a feeble production, by the ſick man.

I wait the recovery of my ſtrength to ſay more; imploring nature to preſerve the only remaining pillar of Parnaſſus we have, and the arm which, dealing the thunder of reaſon, exterminates ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm.



End of the CORRESPONDENCE *between the* KING *of* PRUSSIA *and* M. DE VOLTAIRE, *and of* VOLUME *the* EIGHTH.